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# THE MONTH

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# C. C. MARTINDALE

By

R. A. KNOX

*For more than half a century Fr. C. C. Martindale has contributed articles and reviews to THE MONTH. His first article appeared in the December 1904 issue, under the pseudonym of Jan de Geollac. As a tribute to his work for THE MONTH, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday (25 May), we are publishing the following character sketch written by the late Mgr. R. A. Knox. It formed part of a conference given by Mgr. Knox when, as Catholic chaplain at Oxford, he invited Fr. Martindale in 1936 to give the retreat to the undergraduates.*

—EDITOR.

THE MISSIONER I've got hold of is Fr. Martindale. In modern Oxford, the only motive which seems to impel people to give up, for once, the cinema or the George, is that they have the chance of hearing somebody talk whom they have not heard before, and whom they may not, for some time at least, be able to hear again. For this reason, one should always cultivate rarity value where Oxford is concerned. . . . Fr. Martindale ought to have rarity value in Oxford, because nowadays he very seldom speaks here. But he has destroyed his rarity value by being an extremely apostolic man. I have heard a story, I do not know whether there is any truth in it, that Fr. Martindale took a vow, many years ago, that he would never refuse to write an article or give a sermon, lecture, or retreat, if it was physically possible for him to fulfil the engagement. Whether he did or not, it is certain that that is how he behaves. The result is that you can seldom pick up a number of a missionary magazine without reading an article by him, seldom go through a list of wireless fixtures without seeing that he will be on the air, and many of you, I suppose, will have heard him giving retreat at school. (Not that that last point makes much difference; because I always find that if anybody tells me he remembers perfectly the retreat I gave him at school a few years ago, it turns out to have been

Fr. Woodlock). Anyhow, it is certain that Fr. Martindale does not cultivate rarity value; what he has, has come to him by accident. And one knows his name so well and hears so much about his activities that one takes him for granted, and doesn't ask much what kind of man he is, or what history lies behind him. Let me try to give you a thumb-nail sketch of him, in the manner of the society gossip column.

I first met him at a very important crisis in my life. It was when I was still an Anglican, but had just begun to worry about the Anglican position, in the August of 1915, the second year of the War. In those days, if you were a High Anglican with what one used to call Roman difficulties, one of the people you were sent to see was Lord Halifax; not the present Chancellor of the University, but his father who died some years back. He was a very wonderful old man, with every sign of holiness about him. He asked me to stay for a week-end at Hickleton, the place where he lived in Yorkshire; and I went there with a friend, another High Church clergyman. It was really impossible not to feel at home; the whole household was such an exact replica of a Catholic household; and I still remember going down to dinner dressed up in a cassock and ferraiuolo and heaven knows what (I used to like dressing up in those days), and feeling that there couldn't be much wrong with a Church in which you could wallow about and enjoy yourself like this. And then I was introduced to the other guest who was staying there, a very thin clergyman with a face that looked like an extremely animated skull; not dressed in a cassock at all, but in a rather seedy frock-coat which didn't fit him too well; and I think I knew in that moment that this was the real thing. I thought, for years afterwards, that this meeting was just a Providential accident; something I heard later made me think that Lord Halifax, who was always extremely friendly towards the Church, had asked him down on purpose so that I might hear both sides of the question. Anyhow, I went and talked to Fr. Martindale that evening while he was packing up to go somewhere else; Fr. Martindale is always packing up to go somewhere else. And he was just sufficiently discouraging to make me feel I was caught, though I didn't actually become a Catholic till two years later. Since then, I've always regarded him (if you give marks for spirituality, intellect, will-power, and personal charm, the only things that matter in

the long run) as one of the very greatest men I have been privileged to know.

What was his own history? He was a boy at Harrow, high up in the school, when he suddenly determined that he had got to become a Catholic. His parents succeeded, by the exercise of their authority, in making that impossible for him; whereupon, he says, he became a pagan, which he regarded as the only possible alternative. I don't suppose he actually worshipped Apollo or Hitler or anybody, but he let his mind fall into the pagan mould; and it is appalling to think what a lot of harm Fr. Martindale might have done if he had stayed like that. In a book he wrote long ago, *The Goddess of Ghosts*, you can see the pagan in him struggling to get the upper hand of grace and being beaten every time. As it was, he left Harrow and went straight into the Society of Jesus, so that when he came up to Oxford it was as a member of Campion, Pope's Hall as it was then called. When I came up in 1906, it was only a year since he had taken his degree, and he was still a legend among the people I knew—the amazing Jesuit who was a first in Mods and Greats, Hertford scholar, runner-up for the Ireland, got the Latin and Greek Verse prizes and the Derby scholarship, and then finished off rather unexpectedly with the Ellerton theological essay prize. He wasn't ordained till 1911, and it wasn't long after that, I think, that he came back to Oxford as a priest on the staff of Campion. But by that time the war had broken out; there were few undergraduates and uninteresting ones, and there were a lot of military hospitals about. The result was that Fr. Martindale, who you would naturally have singled out as a man who had, if any man ever had, a mission to the souls of undergraduates, went townee. He spent all his time going round giving cheap cigarettes to wounded soldiers and getting to know their troubles; and the most brilliant priest of his generation developed an uncontrollable preference for the society of uneducated people.

It is true that, after the War, he was a remarkable force in Oxford. During those difficult years—first of all, the people who had been through the war, then the generation of aesthetes—he had an enormous vogue and made many strange friends in the undergraduate world. But his heart was already elsewhere; he had grown too big for Oxford; and when I came back here in 1926, expecting to find Father Martindale in residence, I found

that he was nominally stationed at Oxford, but actually in New Zealand. It was about that time that he developed his taste for visiting the Dominions; not so much out of interest in the Dominions, though he was furiously interested in the Dominions, as because the long sea trips gave him an opportunity to spend all his time in sweltering engine-rooms, giving cheap cigarettes to the stokers and talking to them about their souls. In fact, Fr. Martindale's career has been, from the academic point of view, almost wholly a tragedy; look through the long list of his published works, and you can hardly find one which you would offer a don to read—and yet he never writes badly. From any other point of view, Fr. Martindale's career has been one long round of feverish activity in the service of a Master who had not where to lay His head. Those of you who know Fr. Martindale by sight will know that he always looks as if he were just going to die, and it is a permanent mystery why he doesn't. With no health and very little sleep he goes on all the time doing about six men's work as if there were nothing extraordinary about it.

Well, I don't know if what I have been saying is calculated to make you want to go to the mission or not. It rather depends whether you like or dislike the idea of coming in contact with somebody who is evidently very much better than yourself. Personally when I meet Fr. Martindale it always makes me feel a worm and a thoroughly second-hand article. And that is not a comfortable feeling. But I think it is good for one, now and again, to be shaken out of that self-content which creeps over us so easily in the practice of our common Christian duties, and see things for a moment with the eyes of a man who looks at all our modern problems, political, social, racial, and so on with that directness of vision which arises from a burning zeal for God.

#### NOTICE

OWING to the present dispute in the printing trade and the likelihood of a strike, it may be impossible to produce the June number of *THE MONTH* on time. We would like to assure our readers that we will do our best to produce this number if this is at all possible.



# ST. AELRED OF RIEVAULX<sup>1</sup>

By

AELRED WATKIN

WHEN we hear him, we see him. Aelred of Rievaulx is one of those rare characters who seem to have transcended the limitations of their own epoch and to have crossed the icefloes of the centuries between ourselves and him. Nevertheless, we cannot pick upon any one quality in him to which we can attribute with confidence the immediacy he has for us. As a thinker and writer he has little of the originality and force which makes St. Bernard's voice still sound a trumpet call; as a stylist he was very unequal, eloquent and moving at times, he lacked unity of thought and expression; as an historian he ranks far below some of his contemporaries, and as an administrator his activity and efficiency, considerable as they were, were offset by a naïve optimism in regard to the goodwill of others which events were to show was unfounded. And yet, when all this has been said, we still feel drawn in an especial way to his memory, and he has exercised an influence so deep upon some of his admirers as almost to drown all critical faculty. Even the casual reader of his works wishes to know more about this quiet author who speaks to him as if he were in actual fact talking to him in the wooden hut under the steep cliffs with their dwarf oaks.

To speak in terms of charm is not to tell the whole tale. That Aelred possessed this indefinable quality in abundance is quite certain: it comes to us even through the ill-printed pages of Migne; we do not have to rely upon the evidence of contemporaries to recognise its presence, we can feel it for ourselves. It is, however, his courageous self-revelation that brings Aelred

<sup>1</sup> The life of St. Aelred has been dealt with magisterially by three writers in recent times: by Sir Maurice Powicke in the Introduction to his edition of the *Life of St. Aelred of Rievaulx*, by Walter Daniel; by Dom David Knowles in *The Monastic Order in England*, pp. 243-5, 258-66; and by Mr. Edmund Harvey in his *St. Aelred of Rievaulx*. Unfortunately I have not seen Dom David Knowles's paper in *Studies on The Humanism of the Twelfth Century*.

of Rievaulx so close to ourselves. Few of the arduous battles of the soul's path to God are hidden from our eyes. In autobiographical passages Aelred speaks of his earlier hesitations and doubts, his sins—he is even open enough to speak of habitual and humiliating sin—his difficulties in disciplining his affections and his need for affection. His sermons, also, are full of passages based undoubtedly upon deep personal experience. There is, for example, a vivid portrait of the ambitious and critical monk:

He describes and, as it were, paints before the eyes of the brethren what type of person the abbot should be: so modest, so holy, so lovingly-disposed towards his subjects, so compassionate to them in their labours, so condescending to the weak; next, how the refectory should be organised and how the infirmary should sympathetically be run he confirms by the authority of scripture, so that his hearers respond in their hearts: "Oh if he were abbot, how wise, how eloquent, how kind, how human, he would be!"<sup>1</sup>

The voice of this critical monk comes back to us very vividly across the centuries. And it is, perhaps, this gift of vivid presentation of experiences common to the lot of man that is Aelred's distinguishing quality. He was, of course, not alone in this; indeed, the twelfth century was an age of self-revelation, but in Aelred's case this sense of intimacy is expressive of a personality of singular charm and of a mind where peace and order reigned supreme. Aelred assuredly possessed that "silent heart" of which we speak in the martyrs' hymn.

Aelred was born in 1110 in the shadow of the Roman wall at Hexham. The progress of clerical celibacy had been slow, especially in the north, and Aelred was descended from a long line of married priests who were the guardians of the church of Hexham with its relics of early saints and the crypt built by St. Wilfrid of inscribed Roman stones from Corbridge. Aelred soon left home and was taken into the household of the Earl of Huntingdon who became King David of Scotland in 1124. For ten years Aelred lived at the Scottish court with its memories of St. Margaret and its traditions of Saxon and Hungarian royalty. His schooling was brief, as Jocelin of Furness tells us, and, early involved in administration, he was eventually appointed to the position of steward of the royal household. A close friend of the king and of his son, Aelred had enemies who

<sup>1</sup> *XVII Serm. de Oneribus.*



were jealous of his influence. Given, as he tells us, to close friendships ever since his school days, he seems always to have preserved an inner self which never wholly capitulated to others. This was, doubtless, a strength; but it is certain that some found this quality intensely irritating. To the superficial it appeared to manifest intellectual pride and aloof self-sufficiency.

These years were not happy. Aelred was in high favour at court, he was one whose career seemed to stretch out with measureless possibilities of position and prestige; to outward appearances all could not have been going better. Inwardly, however, Aelred felt more and more frustrated and anxious. He was caught in the toils of sin,<sup>1</sup> resolution faltered in a milieu where a thousand chains kept him from giving himself wholly to God in whom alone he could find peace. When, as he himself tells us, others remarked upon his good fortune, Aelred felt oppressed, not only by the sense of what he was and of what he would wish to be, but also by the knowledge that he was not understood even by those closest to him. Like the young Augustine he longed to make a new start, but no voice called out to him in the garden.

In 1134 Aelred was in Yorkshire on business. Two years before he had heard of the new order of Cîteaux and the fervour of its early monks; now he was told that they had settled close to where he then was. It was within two days of hearing this that Aelred visited the new foundation of Rievaulx, and at once he was violently attracted by everything he saw. That evening he spent at Helmsley Castle, two miles away. It was a night of conflict. Interiorly he was drawn first one way and then the other; at one moment he yearned to throw in his lot with the Cistercians, at another this seemed beyond the bounds of possibility, held as he was by the links he had forged in Scotland and fearful of leaving all that was familiar for something so austere and so unknown.<sup>2</sup> By the morning he had more than half made up his mind, and at dawn he set out for Scotland with his companions. But the road he followed went past the brow of the

<sup>1</sup> This experience made a profound impression upon him. He refers over and over again in his sermons to the shackles forged by a *consuetudo peccandi*.

<sup>2</sup> This is how I interpret Aelred's two visits to Rievaulx after a close reading of Walter Daniel's description and of Aelred's own remarks. Daniel does not quite seem to have understood all that was taking place in his abbot's mind at that moment.

hill above the monastery and the steep track which led down to it. In every sense it was a parting of the ways and Aelred hesitated. Even now he could not make up his mind. He asked one of his servants if he would again like to go down and revisit the abbey. Had the servant preferred to have gone on northwards, Aelred would not have pressed the point and would, perhaps with relief, have followed the Scottish road.<sup>1</sup> The servant, however, contrary to what might be expected—for the hill was steep and he had seen the place only the day before—was all for going down. And Aelred did not return.

Aelred's inner history for the next ten years is largely hidden from us; as far as external events are concerned, the saint early became the companion of Abbot William on several important journeys and in 1141 was sent as the abbot's representative on a mission to Rome. Of the effect of this journey upon Aelred it is hard to judge. He did not, like St. Bruno and St. Ambrose, see the landscape with a poet's eye, and nowhere does he give any hint as to the impact of a scenery and a life which were utterly unfamiliar to him. At the same time there can be little doubt that he became completely captivated by the personality of St. Bernard, whom he must have met on this occasion or possibly earlier on. It is hard to overestimate the effect upon Aelred of the impact of this dynamic personality. It is clear that Bernard stamped an impress upon the saint's thought and writing which lasted for a decade at least, though in his later years we see it gradually disappear and Aelred's own personality and outlook come more clearly into their own.

St. Bernard, like many another great and original genius—Hilaire Belloc and Eric Gill in other spheres may be cited as recent examples—tended to create a school of second-rate imitators. The torrid eloquence, the pointed allegorical phrase, the devastating assurance and the trumpet-calls for reform, all these were, with St. Bernard, but the instruments by which he proclaimed an intense awareness of the overriding claims of God in language stamped with the hall-mark of a highly individual and powerful personality. In the hands of Bernard's imitators it was only too easy for eloquence to turn into rhetoric, allegory into undisciplined fancy, assurance into infallibility and asceticism

<sup>1</sup> Aelred tells us this himself. Daniel puts the saint's request down to humility, but I think he has failed to understand the significance of the incident.

into puritanism. And Aelred did not altogether escape from the impact of a personality far more powerful than his own; some of his earlier writings seem almost to have been written by two persons—the real Aelred, direct and simple, and the disciple of Bernard attempting to reproduce the thoughts and diction of the abbot of Clairvaux, but speaking uncertainly in a tongue and a manner foreign to him.

On Aelred's return from Rome in 1142, he was appointed novice-master and wrote his first book, the *Mirror of Love*. For the reasons which we have given it is a curiously disintegrated work. Composed originally from short meditations sent to his friend Hugh in the form of letters and as a kind of testament to his friendship with Hugh himself and with a young monk called Simon, who was now dead, the original simplicity and directness suffers not only from the rather feeble echoes of Bernard, at whose command the whole was first put into book form, but from an attempt to put the whole composition into a logical framework inspired by what Aelred doubtless thought was the language of the Schools which he had not attended. This latter attempt comes more to the fore in the second book where Aelred first asks and then answers feeble objections to his teaching. This method, when used by a genius such as St. Thomas Aquinas, can illuminate and clarify, but as anyone who has explored the by-paths of scholasticism knows, in inferior hands nothing can be more tedious. And it was not Aelred's *métier*.

Nevertheless, the *Mirror of Love* is a book which lingers in the reader's memory. Not only does Aelred display that gift for summing up a whole truth in a pithy sentence which seems to have been the especial gift of the most profound English spiritual writers,<sup>1</sup> but his own charm is always visible below forms of expression which do not always do it justice. The *Mirror*, also, contains two autobiographical passages which must always leave a haunting impression upon the reader. The description of the life and death of his friend Simon is intensely moving, even after the passage of eight centuries, and Aelred's account of his interview with a novice who found the Cistercian life almost too hard to bear shows a sympathy and a patience in dealing with personal

<sup>1</sup> Especially is this true of the author of the *Cloud* and of Julian of Norwich. Fr. Augustine Baker, despite all his prolixity, sometimes does it with immense effect.

difficulties which can only be the reflection of his own experience.

In 1143 Aelred became abbot of Revesby and in 1147 that of Rievaulx. By now Rievaulx was by far the most important Cistercian abbey in England and, for a variety of reasons—geographical and personal—it had become a centre of spiritual force and influence in the north. Part of this pre-eminence was certainly derived from the personality of her abbot. St. Aelred was industrious, tactful, easy of approach, a fluent speaker and a pleasant person to meet. He was called in to preach sermons at important functions, for he could be counted upon to say the right thing on the right occasion, he was selected as arbitrator in disputes. He already numbered among his friends the members of the royal house of Scotland, the canons of Hexham, the monks of Durham, the Cistercian Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London and the Abbot of Westminster. He kept up a close correspondence with the most powerful in the land.

Yet it was influence rather than power which he wielded. He was no Henry of Blois, to mention one famous contemporary. He had not the qualities of mind or taste which give distinction to almost every word that Henry wrote. But, equally, Aelred never suffered from the eclipses and reverses which marked Henry's path from ambitious striving to peace. Fragments of carved blue lias, flawless in their beauty as the Elgin marbles, are today dug up at Glastonbury to remind us of the cloister built by Henry of Blois; but it is Aelred himself who still lives for us in the ruins of Rievaulx.

Of his capabilities as abbot it is hard to judge. He certainly felt keenly his responsibilities and composed during these years a very beautiful prayer begging for God's help in carrying them out. He in no way neglected his duties and, indeed, it is clear that he found a quiet satisfaction in moulding the religious life of a growing and flourishing monastery. He was tireless in journeying on visitation, in supervising the erection of buildings, in preaching to the brethren and in coping with those day to day problems of administration which can form so stern an ascetic discipline for the conscientious. Nevertheless, granting all this, it remains hard to assess his qualities as an abbot, for it is impossible to tell how far his influence for good was offset by a leniency of rule of which some at least took advantage. Aelred gloried in opening wide the doors of Rievaulx to all comers, for

he possessed a serene optimism which saw the possibilities of good in all. Yet, there was a danger here. It was from mature experience that St. Benedict in his rule emphasised the *difficultas ingressus* and the searching tests to be given to the novice. Rievaulx was to find, as many an abbey and religious order has found, that subjects unfitted by nature or temperament for the religious life cannot permanently be "carried" by the charm or holiness of one man, no matter how great or impressive. Such influence usually diminishes with time—for maturity lessens the capacity for hero-worship—and it tends quickly to disappear with the death of him who has called it into being. So it was at Rievaulx, and the alarming apostasies from religion which occurred in the early years of Aelred's successor may directly be traced to this policy of making Rievaulx a place of refuge for all who would come, many of whom, as the saint's biographer notes, Aelred did not even know.

It may be that this leniency came from a certain *naïveté*<sup>1</sup> which made Aelred, good judge as he was of problems where he was not personally involved, less sure in his judgment of persons. Thus, in one of the autobiographical passages in his book on *Spiritual Friendship*, he describes himself going round the cloister garth at Rievaulx and seeing the brethren sitting there. "I found," he continues, "no one in that multitude whom I did not love and by whom I was not confident that I was loved." The latter part of this statement was an illusion. Aelred had enemies both within and without the walls of Rievaulx. Some said that he had worked for his election as abbot and, to quote Sir Maurice Powicke, "Walter Daniel's Life was written in part as a passionate refutation of the suggestion that he was ambitious, a wirepuller, fond of luxurious living, a successful prig who in his time had been no better than he should have been."<sup>2</sup> That these insinuations were totally without foundation is obvious to any student of Aelred's life and works; that Aelred should have been, as far as we know, unaware that they were being made, shows, perhaps, a certain simplicity in him which could, and doubtless did, render him the catpaw of the unscrupulous and the adroit.

<sup>1</sup> We find occasional examples of it in his writings. Aelred's astounding treatise on the *Nun of Watton* does more credit to his heart than to his head or, indeed, sensibilities.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Aelred of Rievaulx* by Walter Daniel, ed. Powicke, p. lxvi.



As the years went by the saint's health deteriorated. He suffered from the stone, to which later were added arthritis and attacks of asthma.<sup>1</sup> A small hut was constructed for him and it was here that he spent a great deal of the last few years of his life. These years of illness, which he bore with marvellous patience, were those in which Aelred finally became what he was. Pain and illness accepted with resignation work powerfully in the soul. More and more, as time went on, his reserves gave way to a complete simplicity, the derivativeness of style of much of his earlier work becomes less and less apparent and he speaks of God and of men with much more directness and sureness of touch.

Confined as he was to this hut for long periods, Aelred had now greater opportunity for that slow meditative reading which St. Benedict so stresses in his Rule. There is nothing that can deepen the mind so much as daily reading and pondering upon all that is best in the spiritual thought of the past. If a knowledge and love of the Classics lie at the back of all that Europe has meant by education from the fifteenth century to the recent past, equally it was the love and knowledge of the Fathers of the Church which created and sustained all that was best in the life of the monasteries of the early Middle Ages. Indeed, it may well be considered that it was the abandonment of this store of mature and calm wisdom, unprofessional but deeply pondered, in favour of the more spectacular, but more speculative (and therefore less in touch with life and experience) thought of the Schools which did more than anything else to kill the spirit and influence of early monasticism. Circumstances, however, had enabled Aelred to read more often and to ponder more in peace; we therefore notice a calmness and poise in his later writings which is sometimes absent from his earlier ones.<sup>2</sup> The Gospel of St. John and the pages of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose seem to have been much in his hands, but he does not merely re-echo them, he transposes them into the key of his individual thought.

It was during these years that St. Aelred wrote his dialogues on *Spiritual Friendship*. The use of dialogue and the portrayal of real persons do much to make the book live. The shy and sen-

<sup>1</sup> Which malady he shared with St. Augustine and the Venerable Bede.

<sup>2</sup> This can easily be seen if Aelred's works are read in their chronological order.

sitive Ivo of the first book lives on after his death in the pages of the second and third; Walter Daniel, the saint's biographer, with that mixture of impatience and incomprehension which is so peculiarly his own, appears in the second and third books, where he is joined by Gratian, an extrovert who is eager to love and to be loved by all.

But it is not so much the vividness of the dialogues, nor their content—which, indeed, contains little that is novel—which claim our attention; it is the fact that they were written at all. Other monks had written on the same subject—notably Cassian—but Aelred fearlessly sets to work to establish the place of human affection in the context of the early years of a drastic monastic reform. There is an optimism and serenity about his approach before which the morbid and the feverish shrinks away, the calm faith of the author reaches beyond the hesitations of the scrupulous and creates an atmosphere in which self-indulgence is not so much overcome as transcended. To those whose outlook is coloured by the tortured introspectiveness or the popular psychology of a later age, Aelred's view may seem suspect, if not dangerous. And though it is true that in certain quarters Aelred has been used to justify an unpleasing and self-conscious "cult" of friendship, we must remember that—in the words of the *Cloud of Unknowing*—"the nigher we are to truth the nigher we are to error." In the end, as Aelred shows, human and divine love are one, and the common enemy of both is sin. It is the calmness and clarity with which the conviction is expressed which makes this particular work of Aelred something of an epoch in spiritual writing. We must try not to be too alienated by the rather unpleasing use which has been made of it in certain hands.

So the years went by, years of considerable literary activity and of a large correspondence which has, unfortunately, perished. Of Aelred's historical works—of which he wrote several—little needs to be said. They are vivid in style and presentation but not of importance in content. The saint's *De institutione inclusarum*, a work on the religious life for anchoresses, is not in his best vein. He seems to be obsessed by the fragility of woman's resolution and tends to lose the poise and optimism of the *de Spirituali Amicitia* which was written about the same time.

Of his directly spiritual writings we have yet to mention his

sermons—including a series on the “burdens” of Isaiah and an early work on the “Child Jesus at the age of twelve years” which has all Aelred’s charm. His sermons differ widely in character: some are really eloquent and moving, while others are turgid and involved. Aelred may well have been one of those preachers who are at their best when speaking spontaneously, but lose all force and point when they prepare a sermon too carefully, and especially when they base it directly upon the writings of others. Of all Aelred’s sermons, the Homilies on Isaiah are the most consistent and still repay careful reading.

The saint’s final work—unrevised, if not unfinished—was a treatise on the *Soul*. Again, there is nothing original or profound, but in many respects it is the most pleasing of all his writings. Composed, again in dialogue form, with the awareness of his own approaching death much in his mind, this book exhibits a simplicity and directness which must make any reader feel that the author has finally arrived at that complete maturity of mind which is the reward of patience and suffering. Its philosophical ideas are of the simplest and it is markedly reminiscent of St. Augustine’s *Soliloquies*. Nevertheless, it is pure Aelred. The tumultuous echoes of Bernard are now completely hushed, and the work proceeds with all the quiet movement of the seasons. Its final words mark the passage between Aelred’s life and his death: “for without doubt [the saints] have care for us and pray for us with the more earnestness because they know that without us they cannot be fulfilled.” He was soon to take his part in this consummation of the saints.

St. Aelred’s death has so often and so well been described that there is no need to dwell upon it here. His illness and infirmity increased and, as he lay on his bed, he begged for Christ’s coming, saying in English over and over again “*Festinate, for Crist luvē.*” His last intelligible words were: “Into thy hands I commend my spirit.” He died on 12 January 1167.

Dom David Knowles has warned us against letting our historical judgment be lulled by “the siren voice of romanticism,” and we should, perhaps, be even more upon our guard against being captivated by personal charm. Aelred had this in abundance and he is able to reveal it to us across the dead wastes of the centuries. We must, therefore, not be swept off our feet by the extravagant claims that have sometimes been made for him.



He was no original thinker, he said little that had not been said as well or better by others, his works are unequal in thought and content and when—as in his earlier writings—he is derivative he is unconvincing and uncertain. Yet, when we have said all this, we cannot escape from the recognition of a sanctity and a simplicity which is, because personal, in its own way unique. Beyond all that charm which still seems to haunt the ruins of Rievaulx and is displayed in almost every line he wrote, we are aware that we are in the presence of a soul given wholeheartedly to the search for God. Perhaps the most moving page in Walter Daniel's biography is that in which he sums up Aelred's behaviour as a novice: "At all times he submitted the preference of his own will to that of another . . . a sort of miracle, indeed, a sort of martyrdom." Here, Aelred steps across the centuries from the cloisters of Rievaulx to those of Lisieux.

## AMOUR-PROPRE

### *The Rise of an Ethical Concept*

By

ANTHONY LEVI

AMOUR-PROPRE first became notorious when the cultivated cynicism of La Rochefoucauld revealed the basis of self-interest in our most moral actions. His *Réflexions ou sentences et maximes morales* has a disabused quality which is due no doubt in part to the disillusion of an essentially picaresque imagination. La Rochefoucauld read the *Astrée* every year; he was pained and embittered by the conversion of Mme de Longueville, by the betrayals of the Fronde and by the refusal even of his political opponents to take him seriously. But in spite of the emphasis on the ubiquity of *amour-propre*, the strictures on human motivation are ambiguous and the maxims, related to French ethical thought of the mid-seventeenth century, constitute an early and not entirely satisfactory attempt to emancipate secular ethics from dogmatic morality.

The maxims were the major work to issue from the impor-

tant salon of Mme de Sablé,<sup>1</sup> a highly connected lady of straitened means and morbidly hypochondriac imagination who took up residence at Port-Royal in 1656. This enabled her to attend Mass from a special balcony and thereby avoid contact with the contagious Parisian crowd. Herself a former *précieuse*, frequenter of the hôtel Rambouillet and the *samedis* of Madeleine Scudéry, Mme de Sablé was regarded not only by La Rochefoucauld, but also by judges as shrewd as Angélique Arnauld and Pascal, as an authority on the human heart. Port-Royal suffered her melancholy whims for the sake of her high connections—later to be of great advantage to them—but her obsessive fear of disease and death made her presence burdensome. "One suffers to see these saintly women," exclaims Sainte-Beuve in indignation, "having to put themselves so much out for the sake of this maniac of quality." Mme de Sablé did not share the exile to Port-Royal des Champs and the extent of her Jansenism is almost perfectly summed up in her remark on the nuns' refusal to sign the formulary in 1664, "Que cela est beau, si cela est beau! Mais je ne sais si cela est beau."

Among the *habitués* of her salon at Port-Royal were La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, Nicole, Arnauld and Arnauld d'Andilly, the Jansenist Princesse de Guémené and the Duchesse de Liancourt, the beautiful Duchesse de Schomberg, Domat (author of *Les lois civiles*), the Jesuit fathers Rapin and Bouhours, Menjot the Calvinist doctor, the Molinist Marquis de Sourdis, the Abbé d'Ailly and the academician Jacques Esprit. This heterogeneous assembly—the list is far from exhaustive—discussed theology, of course, education, medicine and, above all, morals. The principal entertainment provided was the fabrication and discussion of maxims, and voluminous notes concerning these are preserved among the manuscripts of Mme de Sablé's doctor, Vallant, in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The Marquise was celebrated for her table and La Rochefoucauld sends her thirteen maxims, "I beg you to allow that, since I have not been able to present you with the truffles, I should at least send you the maxims which are not so valuable; but, since no one does anything for nothing in this century, I beg you to give me in exchange the recipe for making

<sup>1</sup> There are two invaluable studies of Mme de Sablé and her salon on which I have drawn freely: Victor Cousin's *Mme de Sablé* (Paris, 1854) and N. Ivanoff, *La Marquise de Sablé et son salon* (Paris, 1927).

carrot soup . . ."; the maxims are regularly exchanged and discussed; in a letter of La Rochefoucauld to Jacques Esprit there is mention of a communal volume to which Mme de Sablé shall also contribute, and we possess, besides La Rochefoucauld's, collections of maxims by Domat, Arnauld d'Andilly, de Sourdis, the Abbé d'Ailly and Mme de Sablé. In addition, Victor Cousin's suggestion that some at least of Pascal's "*Pensées*" were discussed in this salon seems confirmed by the manuscripts of the *portefeuille* Vallant.

In his recent history of French literature, M. Antoine Adam has made the passing suggestion that La Rochefoucauld's cynical account of human virtue might be due to the Jansenist background of Mme de Sablé's salon, and detailed examination of the maxims confirms that impression. But although La Rochefoucauld is constantly concerned to show the impure motivation of apparently virtuous acts, several maxims adopt the anti-Jansenist position that virtue and self-interest are not necessarily incompatible. Hence "We can love nothing without reference to ourselves and we are only following our taste and our pleasure when we refer our friends to ourselves. But it is none the less by this preference alone that friendship can be true and perfect," "Vices enter into the composition of virtues as poisons into the composition of their antidotes," "The name of virtue is as useful to interest as are the vices," "Interest gives rise to all sorts of virtues and vices," "Interest, which we accuse of all our crimes, often merits praise for our good actions." It is striking, however, that never once does *amour-propre* appear compatible with virtue. Therefore, although La Rochefoucauld is clearly no Port-Royal purist in the ethics of self-interest, we are led to wonder why he is content merely to condemn *amour-propre* wherever his ingenuity leads him to discover it.

The chief elements in La Rochefoucauld's work which suggest Jansenist influence are the undertaking "to speak of the falsity of so many apparent virtues," his self-justification in the *Avant-propos*, "what the *Réflexions* contain is only the abridgement of a moral doctrine in conformity with the thought of several Fathers of the Church" (not, by any chance, Augustine?), a humorous reference in a letter to his niece on the evils of a "Molinist confessor," and his attitude not to self-interest, but to *amour-propre*. *Amour-propre* is clearly opposed to charity, and its

definition is a parody of what the catechism says of that virtue "Amour-propre is the love of oneself and of all things for oneself." The opposition is absolute, theological, "God has permitted, in order to punish man for original sin, that he should make a God of his *amour-propre*, to be tormented by it in all the actions of his life." One maxim only defines the relation between interest and *amour-propre*, "Interest is the soul of *amour-propre* . . .," to which may be added Mme de Sablé's, "Since nature is so subject to *amour-propre*, and *amour-propre* to interest . . ." (*Discours contre les médecins*). Interest is the psychological motivation which flourishes on the ground of *amour-propre*, which is itself conceived by La Rochefoucauld alternatively as a basic human state or condition, as in the maxims quoted, and as a psychological motive power equivalent to interest, in perhaps the majority of maxims where it occurs.

Apparently virtuous acts are necessarily vitiated, therefore, not if their motivation is interested, but only if it springs from *amour-propre*. Yet in one sense the words *intérêt* and *amour-propre* are practically interchangeable and in another interest breeds on *amour-propre* and is its soul. This is a strangely incoherent doctrine, and the clue to its ambiguity lies in the theological associations of the term *amour-propre* whose presence we have already noticed.

The same theological associations of *amour-propre* occur in the works of other writers on morals from the same salon, particularly those more closely associated with Port-Royal. Pascal has a similar definition, "The nature of *amour-propre* and of this human self is to love only oneself and to consider only oneself,"<sup>1</sup> and it is worth recording that Pascal's *Pensées* were not published until 1670, eight years after Pascal's death, while the first (clandestine) edition of La Rochefoucauld's maxims appeared in 1664. Neither author can therefore have consulted the published work of the other, and their only means of contact was through their mutual friend, Mme de Sablé. Pascal's definition again implicitly opposes *amour-propre* to the catechism definition of charity. He has, too, the equation of *amour-propre* with "the instinct which leads man to make himself God." The denunciation is stronger than La Rochefoucauld's, but Pascal desired to convert—"it is necessary to love only God and to hate only oneself"—and with

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*, ed. Lafuma, 99.

Pascal the theological overtones are always clearer. Like La Rochefoucauld, he points to the superficial similarity of true and false virtue, "nothing is so like charity as cupidity, and nothing is so opposed to it," a remark which Nicole frequently echoes and which suggests that the criterion distinguishing true virtue from its counterfeit might possibly be the presence of the imperceptible but all-changing *gratia efficax* which the Jansenists defended.

Pascal is not consistent in his attitude towards *amour-propre* and his Jansenist moments do not everywhere predominate, since he admits in the "wager," "the heart loves universal being naturally and itself naturally." According to its most recent editor, M. Brunet, this text dates from 1656, but in October 1651 Pascal had exposed the theology of *amour-propre* differently, in a letter to his sister on the death of their father. For the first time the theological innuendoes of La Rochefoucauld become quite clear. Pascal writes:

God created man with two loves, one for God, the other for himself . . . in this state man not only loved himself without sin, but could not refrain from loving himself without sin. Since then, sin having arrived . . . and the love of self having remained alone in this great soul capable of an infinite love, this *amour-propre* has expanded and overflowed in the vacuum left by the love of God, and so man loved himself alone and all things for himself . . . that is the origin of *amour-propre*.

One notes the "all things for himself" which appeared in La Rochefoucauld's definition.

The source of this theological view of *amour-propre* immediately suggests itself: Augustine's theory of the two loves on which the two cities are founded. This theory had often been referred to. St. Francis de Sales mentions it in the first book of the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, without, however, alluding to the key text of St. Augustine. In his letters *amour-propre* is simply equivalent to "vainglory" or "self-will," to use the corresponding jargon of English ascetical writers. There is a typical letter "to a nun" on the subject, "*Amour-propre* fears secretly that others may equal or surpass us." More significant, perhaps, is Raymond Sébond, translated by Montaigne and defended by him in the most famous of the essays. Pascal used to quote passages even of Augustine quoted in this essay, and may perhaps have



been acquainted with Sébond's *Theologia Naturalis*. Most of Augustine's theory is in this work somewhere; the distinction between the two loves, their incompatibility, "these two loves will be capital enemies of one another because they cannot coexist," the usurpation by man of God's place in his heart, "Man, by first loving himself, makes himself like to God and places himself before God," and there are references to the two cities and even to the heart as a faculty of knowledge, which was to become a discovery of enormous importance to Pascal and by which he later tried to save himself from the looming danger of fideism. But Sébond again equates *amor proprii* with "the love of honour and excellence," and even if his influence on Pascal were proven, he is unlikely to have been solely responsible for the creation of the new overtones of meaning discernible in the term *amour-propre* as used in the salon of Mme de Sablé.

The real source of the theological implications of La Rochefoucauld's use of the term and of Pascal's early doctrine lies nearer at hand, and seems certainly to have been the *Augustinus* of Jansenius, published posthumously in 1640. It is extremely unlikely that La Rochefoucauld ever opened this enormous manifesto and it is by no means certain that Pascal did, although he is so well-acquainted with so many of its themes, the role of the imagination, the distinction between *sciences de mémoire* and *sciences de raison*, *amour-propre*, the exhaustive division of Pagan philosophers into Stoics and Epicureans—that one hesitates to ascribe so exact a knowledge to conversations with Nicole and Arnauld.

Jansenius's exposition of the Augustinian theory of *amour-propre* contains all the elements required to explain the uses of the term we have examined in Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, and may quite possibly have drawn on Sébond's earlier work. The main argument is in the second book, *de statu naturae lapsae*, chapter twenty-five.

This most effective self-love alone, into which man has fallen, is sufficient to arouse these unlawful desires even if the will does not wish it and no sensible appetite stimulates. . . . Therefore it is with reason that Augustine regards this self-love alone as the most general and most fruitful fountain of each and every vice; he distinguishes the earthly city, whose chief among men was Adam, from the heavenly city: "The two loves have constituted the two cities, the

earthly city is formed by the love of self taken as far as the contempt for God, the heavenly city by the love of God taken as far as the contempt for self." How certainly right and true.

Here we have *amor sui*, the effect of the Fall, considered as a state rather than a motive (in distinction to Sébond), and to explain the psychological motivation of self-love, Jansenius quotes the famous "My love is my guiding force, I am led by it wheresoever I am led," supporting Augustine with a text from Fulgentius.<sup>1</sup> Above all he reiterates the absolute incompatibility between the love of God and self-love, "there is no middle term between charity and culpable cupidity."

One member of Mme de Sablé's *côterie*, who had himself annotated a copy of the *Augustinus*, certainly did base his concept of *amour-propre* on that work. This was Pierre Nicole, whose *Essais de morale* were published from 1671 onwards. His *Traité de la civilité chrétienne* opposes the two loves in this way: "The charity which loves God desires that God should be loved by all creatures: and the cupidity which loves itself would like us to be the object of all men's love." Nicole is perpetually comparing false virtue with true virtue, both appearing similar, distinguished only by the soul's state of justification or non-justification, by the presence or absence of *gratia efficax* which changes the moral sign of any activity. The corruption within and the splendour without is the lurid theme of his description of the ball, at once "a gathering of charming persons" and "a horrible massacre of souls"; it occurs again in his analysis of the nature of human society, "Externally there was nothing better ordered, more correct, more polite . . . because being inspired and motivated by *amour-propre* alone, *amour-propre* would not appear at all; and being completely devoid of charity, one would see everywhere only the forms and qualities of charity." Even oneself is unable to judge whether the principle of one's activity is charity or *amour-propre*, just as one had no certainty of being predestined or not, of having *gratia efficax* or being without it. Nicole was much exercised by the pastoral problems to which this state of affairs gave rise.

For Nicole then the vitiation of apparent virtue by *amour-propre* is a major theme, and it is treated squarely in the perspective of Jansenius's teaching on grace (though one would certainly not wish to commit Nicole to having held that teaching in its

<sup>1</sup> *Il de statu purae naturae* I, 3.

entirety). La Rochefoucauld is not concerned with the possibility of charity or of an efficient grace, but his denunciation of *amour-propre* carries with it the clear reference to Augustine's opposition of the two loves, as exposed by Jansenius. *Amour-propre* was necessarily vicious because, in its full theological context, it was exclusive of the love of God.

La Rochefoucauld's notion of friendship as "a society, a mutual respecting of interests . . . an intercourse in which *amour-propre* always seeks its own advantage," betrays another hall-mark of the salon he frequented, the rationalist analysis of friendship as neither emotional nor affective, but based on intellectual judgments. The same is observable in Nicole and in Mme de Sablé herself, "That union which is based only on the same pleasures and the same occupations does not deserve the title of friendship, because it comes ordinarily only from a certain *amour-propre*, which causes us to love everything which resembles ourselves."<sup>1</sup> This doctrine, too, with its rationalist conception of friendship and its motivation of *amour-propre* may very well proceed from the *Augustinus* and, indeed, from the same chapter which quotes Augustine on the two cities, "For the love of friendship towards another is as an extension and likeness of self-love, as the branches are on extension of the trunk: and one begins to regard the other as oneself." Mme de Sablé's determined (and illogical) efforts to save friendship from *amour-propre* show not only the *précieuse* attachment to that virtue, but again the clearly theological overtones of the word *amour-propre*.

La Rochefoucauld, both more cynical and more logical, might certainly have had these analyses from Mme de Sablé whose intellectual prowess, however, certainly did not extend to the 2,600 folio columns of the *Augustinus*. The question therefore arises in the case of the doctrine of friendship (if it did come from Jansenius's work) as in the case of *amour-propre*, what was the identity of the intermediary between the Jansenist theologians and the secular *moralistes* of the salon? Undoubtedly it is conceivable that Nicole, or even Pascal or Arnauld, should occasionally have been cast in this part. But the real intermediary seems to have been the professed *bel esprit* Jacques Esprit. His contemporaries do not speak highly of him, but he certainly enjoyed La Rochefoucauld's esteem, and was regarded by him

<sup>1</sup> *De l'amitié.*



as the final authority on matters concerned with the maxims. La Rochefoucauld sends him three of these, "tell me what needs to be changed," "you have done me great pleasure by correcting the maxims." Jacques Esprit was himself to become the author of a Jansenistically conceived treatise, *De la fausseté des vertus humaines* (1677-8), a dull, monotonous compilation in which an enormous list of virtues is taken, one to a chapter, to show that apparent virtues are all vitiated by their "human" motivation and that all virtue comes from God (these propositions being considered disjunctive). The analysis of friendship has the characteristic qualities, "all our friendship ought to be referred to our *amour-propre* as their true principle," with a similarly rationalist concept of pity, also to be found in La Rochefoucauld. The treatise reads like a turgid version of what La Rochefoucauld himself turned into epigrammatic form, with this difference, that Jacques Esprit was concerned to glorify the God-given virtues which contrasted with those vitiated by *amour-propre*. "Since man put himself in God's place and commenced to love and adore himself; since interest became the principle of his actions . . .," "On account of the corruption of his nature man performs without goodness and without virtue an infinity of actions which are of themselves good and virtuous." In view of these opinions and of the deference paid to their author by La Rochefoucauld the theological implications of La Rochefoucauld's own maxims on *amour-propre* become perfectly explicable.

He was not the only *libertin* writer to use the word outside a theological context but with the theological overtones still clinging to it. The Epicurean Saint-Evremond, whom no one could suspect of Jansenism, although he had assisted at the meetings of the salon and was a great friend of Mme de Sablé's eldest son Urbain, still feels the surcharge of meaning with which the *Augustinus* endowed it. "Nature, which can consent to let itself be destroyed by the sentiment of love for God, opposes in secret the least change in its beauty by a movement of *amour-propre* of which it can not rid itself."<sup>1</sup> But with Saint-Evremond, as with Mme de Sablé herself and with the Abbé d'Ailly, *amour-propre*, although ethically unacceptable, is merely a limiting factor of virtue, capable of coexisting with it in different degrees.

Very soon *amour-propre* was to be rehabilitated, to become the

<sup>1</sup> *Sur la complaisance qu'ont les femmes en leur beauté.*

perfectly respectable motivation of virtuous as well as vicious acts. The Abbé d'Ailly, who in 1678 edited Mme de Sablé's maxims with his own *Pensées diverses*, already uses *amour-propre* in the sense in which the eighteenth-century optimists were to employ it. He writes, as La Rochefoucauld could never have done, "*amour-propre* makes all vices and all moral virtues," "Although it is true to say that men never act without interest, it should not be thought that everything is corrupt on that account." He speaks of "honest and praiseworthy interests," of "well-ordered *amour-propre*." On the devotion of ageing ladies he is as cynical as Saint-Evremond and although his admiration for Descartes is less marked than that of Nicole and Arnauld, he believes in the moral criterion of reason, remaining a Cartesian in morals where the Jansenists did not.

There were Jansenist writers on morals outside the immediate *côterie* of Mme de Sablé who used *amour-propre* in its full theological meaning—one ought perhaps to mention the early *De l'usage des passions* of J. F. Sénault (1643 is the date of the first edition in Brunet's *Manuel du Libraire*, but other authorities give later dates) which has an interesting chapter on the subject. St. Cyran uses the word in a letter dated 1641, and, of course, the theological implications are still visible in *libertin* writers like Saint-Evremond and La Rochefoucauld. By the end of the century, however, *amour-propre* is rehabilitated, so that Louis de Sacy, friend of Mme Lambert, can regard it in his *Traité de l'amitié* (1703) as "the first and perhaps sole motive force of man," and talk of using it "to lead men to virtue itself." "This sentiment which nature inspires is the source of all vices in the evil; corrected by reason it is the principle of all virtues in the good." *Amour-propre* is rectified no longer by *gratia efficax*, but by *raison*: Cartesianism has won the day. Jacques Abbadie and La Placette are both quoted by the eighteenth-century dictionaries (the same quotations in Furetière and Trévoux) as using the term in a sense quite compatible with true virtue, and we await therefore only the panegyrists of *amour-propre*, Mandeville and Pope, Voltaire and d'Holbach.

The rehabilitation was not, however, achieved simply on a wave of the Cartesian tide, for by the end of the seventeenth century Descartes' major positions were no longer generally considered tenable. Bernier's *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* had popu-

larised that philosopher's epicureanism and the death-blow was dealt by Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, of which Le Clerc published an abstract as early as 1688, two years before the date of publication in England. Bayle definitively abandoned belief in innate ideas in 1703 and Fontenelle, despite the rear-guard action he waged at the Académie des Sciences, was not a Cartesian in epistemology. But if *amour-propre* was no longer capable of being rendered innocuous by submission to Cartesian rationality, a new doctrine arose to draw its sting, the so-called *providentialisme naturel* associated with Bayle, by which passion and prejudice co-operate to produce the effects of virtue. "In general it is true to say that the world is only conserved in the state in which we see it because men are filled with a thousand false prejudices and a thousand irrational passions."<sup>1</sup> The same idea is to be found in Fontenelle, "what nature did not obtain from our reason it obtains from our folly,"<sup>2</sup> and there are maxims to this effect by both La Rochefoucauld and Mme de Sablé. Both Fontenelle and Bayle regard *amour-propre* as co-natural to man but, although the passions are still suspect, they are no longer necessarily to be condemned out of hand, since they contribute to good in the world, or at least to the preservation of human society. In England Pope and especially Bernard Mandeville enthusiastically furthered this doctrine, themselves influencing Voltaire and d'Holbach in France who achieved its adoption into the ethical canon of the eighteenth century.

The semantic history of the term *amour-propre* derives therefore from the theological speculations and the ethical codes of the seventeenth century. The uses to which it was put and the implications which it carried reflect in miniature the progress of a vast theological debate which began in the heat of esoteric controversy among the converted and ended in the wholesale eighteenth-century attack on dogma in general. The history of the word is important, if only because it illustrates the significance of the background and history of the terms used, at various times, to express the deposit of faith in propositions. Each of these terms has a background which, although easily forgotten, forms an integral part of its meaning.

Is it, for instance, just possible that the ambiguity of the word

<sup>1</sup> Bayle, *Nouvelles lettres critiques*.

<sup>2</sup> *Dialogues des morts*.

*amour-propre* played its part in the affair of Fénelon's condemnation? For if Fénelon considered that *amour-propre* excluded by its nature the love of God, then it was necessary in his *Maximes des Saints* to find a form of love of God which excluded its opposite, which was, in fact, pure and disinterested. There is at least ample evidence to show that Fénelon, throughout his spiritual letters, used the term in its full Augustinian sense—while Bossuet, who uses it, for instance, in *De la connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même*, did not. Fénelon himself points out that Bossuet took "interest" as the formal object of hope, while he had used it in its vernacular sense, "I have therefore regularly and uniformly used a French term in the true sense which the only authors who are authoritative in our language have in this matter rendered current in our century.<sup>1</sup> One wonders to what extent, exactly, the condemnation was bound up with matters of vocabulary and if, in this case, some compromise formulation might not have been reached—a solution, incidentally, which would in its turn inevitably have hastened the final rehabilitation of the term we have been discussing.

## FRANCIS LINE, S.J.

### *Missionary and Scientist*

By

CONOR REILLY

IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE mention has been made of the contributions of Fr. Francis Line, S.J. to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (London).<sup>2</sup> These few communications, published in 1675, were but the last productions of a long life of labour. For almost fifty years Line had followed the developments of science, adding his own efforts to those of English and

<sup>1</sup> First letter to Bossuet in defence of the *Maximes des Saints*.

<sup>2</sup> THE MONTH, August 1957.

Continental scholars. If his life had been spent in the peace of a university cloister there would be nothing remarkable in such a record. But eighteen of those fifty years were lived as a missionary amid the turmoil of Commonwealth and Restoration England. The remainder were spent as an exile, training young English Jesuits for their dangerous work at home.

Line was born, probably in London, in 1595. Details of his family and early life are lacking. All we can say with certainty is that the records of St. Omers College, Flanders, place him in the senior class in 1622. In the following year he entered the novitiate of the English Province of the Society of Jesus which was then at Liège. It seems that Line showed exceptional talent in his studies for the priesthood. After his ordination, instead of being sent directly to the English mission, he was retained at Liège as professor of Hebrew and mathematics.

His teaching duties did not hinder his further studies, especially in mathematics and physics. His main interest in those days lay in the designing and construction of sundials, a highly esteemed branch of seventeenth-century science. He invented several remarkable types of dial, one of which was described in a letter written from Liège in 1632. It consisted of a brass sphere suspended in a vessel of water. A pointer in the shape of a little fish indicated the hours of the day on a scale fixed to the side of the sphere. Another dial was so constructed that a blind man might use it to tell the time. The sunlight was focused through a glass sphere on to a metal scale. The warm spot on the scale indicated the time of the day.

Line's sundials attracted attention among scholars in many parts of Europe. Claude Fabri de Peiresc, the great French patron of science, expressed his admiration for their designer. Travellers from the north brought accounts of them to the scientific circles of Rome, while it became the custom for English scholars on their Continental tours to inspect them at Liège. Members of the Royal Society described the dials in their letters home, and the very patron of the Society himself, King Charles II, took time off his journey to Spa to see and admire them. This visit was to have an unexpected outcome many years later.

But Line's scientific studies were not limited to the construction of sundials. He also carried out investigations on the nature of light, on the properties of the atmosphere, and on the



possibility of producing a vacuum. Considerable attention was being given to these problems at that time. Interest in the study of pneumatics was especially keen. Line, like other physicists, was stirred by the publication, in 1644, of a description of Torricelli's famous barometer experiments.

Though deeply immersed in these problems, Line did not forget the call of England. He had always hoped to be sent to work on the mission. In 1657 or early 1658 his wish was granted and he sailed for home.

For eighteen years Line laboured in England. His first assignment was in Derbyshire. In 1659 he was called to London. It was in this year that he published his first major work in scientific controversy. It was entitled *De Pseudo-quadratura circuli Dom. Thomae Vitae*. It consisted of a refutation of the claims of Fr. Thomas White, an English secular priest, to have solved that perennial problem of the pseudomath, the "squaring of the circle." White replied to Line's criticisms with his *Apologia pro Doctrina*, published in London in the following year. Line countered, this time with a work written in English, *Refutation of the Attempt to Square The Circle*. By this time others had joined in the controversy, and Line found himself ranged on the side of Christian Huygens and R. F. Slusius against, not alone Thomas White, but also a Jesuit, Fr. Gregory à St. Vincentio. Fr. Gregory had written a book in which he also claimed to have solved the problem of "squaring the circle." Huygens had good naturedly denied the claim and presented irrefutable objections. Fr. Gregory was annoyed and persisted in his opinions. His confrere's "acrimonious obstinacy" embarrassed Line. It was totally opposed to the good mannered, gentlemanly style of his own works of controversy.

A book published by the Honourable Robert Boyle in 1661 stimulated Line to further controversy. The work, *New Experiments Physico-Mechanical touching the Spring and Weight of Air*, was a practical study of pneumatics. Boyle described his air-pump experiments; their results appeared to him to confirm the view that the column of mercury in a Torricellian barometer was sustained by the weight and elasticity of the external air. Though he actually refrained from making any statement as to the nature of the apparently empty space above the mercury in the tube, it followed logically from his theory that this "Torricellian vacuum"

was indeed empty space. Line, recalling his own pneumatic experiments, felt that Boyle was mistaken. He argued that besides the weight and elasticity of the air, a third force was needed to sustain the column of mercury in the barometer tube. This force he named the *funiculus*. It consisted of "extremely rarefied mercury" which filled the space and, "acting like a little rope, suspended the mercury column from the top of the tube." Line published these views in a small book, *De Corporum Inseparabilitate*, printed in London in 1661.

The books shows Line as a confirmed controversialist. He examined not only the work of Boyle, but also that of Otto von Guericke, of Torricelli, of Pascal, and several other scientists. His method is consistent and scientific. In separate sections he describes the experiments of his adversaries, gives the theories they propose to explain their results, and then attempts to show that these theories are unsatisfactory. In conclusion he explains how his own "funicular hypothesis" provides a much better explanation in each case. Unfortunately not every part of his book is as sound as this well-ordered treatment would lead us to expect. Apart from the general theory of the *funiculus*, which is merely a restatement of the Aristotelian teaching that nature abhors a vacuum, Line makes an erroneous criticism of the results obtained by Blaise Pascal in one of his barometer experiments. Pascal's admirers were greatly annoyed by Line's charge of inaccuracy against their master.

Two replies appeared in 1662. One, by Gilbert Clarke, proposed Descartes's *vortices* in places of Line's "funicular hypothesis." The other was by Boyle himself who had agreed, at the earnest request of many friends, to defend his doctrine. He did not write, he said, in any spirit of contention or with ill feeling towards Line, but only that he might explain some obscure points in his *New Experiments*. He entitled his book *A Defence of the Doctrine of the Spring and Weight of Air Against the Objections of Franciscus Linus*. It is a very valuable work. It reveals Boyle as an acute and courteous controversialist. Moreover, his efforts to reply to Line's objections clarified his own teachings on pneumatics. It was in this work that Boyle showed that the volume and pressure of air bear an inverse relationship to one another. This was the first explicit statement of "Boyle's Law."

Christian Huygens, though he disagreed with Line's theory of

the *funiculus*, yet was not fully satisfied with Boyle's *Defence*. He wrote to the Royal Society of London, asking their opinion of the explanation Boyle had given of one of Line's experiments. The Committee of the Society decided to investigate the matter for themselves. At their meeting on New Year's Eve, 1662, "Dr Goddard gave an account of the mercurial experiment of Linus, which had been recommended to him, Sir Robert Moray and Dr. Wilkins, it being made in private, and before the Society where the Lord Viscount Brouncker likewise made it twice." The results of these tests were sent to Huygens. In spite of the galaxy of scientists who had performed the experiments, he was not satisfied. Some months later we find the Royal Society, as the result of another letter from Huygens, instructing Dr. Goddard to carry out Line's experiment once more.

In 1665 Line is recorded as being in Lancashire. A few years later he was again called to London. After so many years the visit of Charles II to the College of Liège was bearing fruit. Line was invited by the King to build an elaborate sundial in the Privy Garden at Whitehall. He accepted the invitation. He based his design on the Liège models, and in 1669 completed the dial. A contemporary print shows it as a large pyramidal structure, with branching arms supporting globes, dials, pointers, and scales of many types. With these, it was claimed, "besides the hours of all kinds diversely expressed, many things also belonging to Geography, Astrology, and Astronomy are by the Sunne's shadow made known to the eye."

This great sundial suffered a sad fate not many years later. John Aubrey, in his *Brief Lives*, describes its destruction. The dial, he wrote, was "one night, *anno Dni* 1674, as I take it, broken all to pieces (for they were of glass spheres) by the earl of Rochester, Lord Buckhurst, Fleetwood Shephard, etc., coming in from their revells. 'What,' said the earl of Rochester, 'doest thou stand heer to marke time? Dash they fell to worke.' There was a watchman always stood there to secure it." Alas, the watchman failed in his duty that night. With Aubrey we can lament that this, "one of the finest dialls in the world," is no more.

Line was not in England to see the destruction of his dial. Now well advanced in years, he had been recalled from the English mission. In 1672 he arrived in Liège once more.

Old age did not decrease his interest in science. He took



advantage of his leisure to write an account of his great dial at Whitehall. He published both Latin and English versions of this work in 1673. He still designed sundials and also devoted some of his time to experiments in optics.

Ignace Gaston Pardies, S.J., a philosopher and physicist at Clermont College, Paris, conducted, during the year 1672, a controversy with Isaac Newton in the pages of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. Pardies questioned Newton's explanation of why the spectrum formed by a beam of sunlight shining into a dark room through a pinhole in the shutters, and then through a glass prism on to the opposite wall, should be oblong and not circular. Newton had said that this was due to the fact that white light "consists of rays differently refrangible, which (without any respect to a difference in their incidence) were, according to their degree of refrangibility, transmitted towards divers parts of the wall." Thus the narrow beam of white light was widened, each colour spreading out into a separate band of the spectrum. Pardies maintained that the elongation of the spectrum was due to the difference in the angle of incidence of the light rays "proceeding from opposite parts of the sun's disc." However, after a number of letters had been exchanged, Pardies admitted that Newton was correct.

Line had been following the controversy, and was not satisfied by the conclusion. He decided to investigate the question for himself. In January 1675 the *Transactions* published *A Letter of the Learned Franciscus Linus to a Friend of his in London animadverting on Mr. Isaac Newton's Theory of Light and Colours*. Line wrote that he had often tried the experiment, but had always found that on a bright day the sun's image was round and not oblong. Perhaps, he suggested, the oblong image Newton described, was formed not "by the true sun beams, but by rays proceeding from some bright cloud." Newton did not reply to this criticism, but left it to Oldenburg, the editor of the *Transactions*, to refer Line to the answer already given to Pardies. But Line was still not satisfied, and wrote again. The reiterated suggestion that he may not have been sufficiently careful in carrying out the experiment irritated Newton. He now replied in two detailed letters. He insisted on the accuracy of his observations, and suggested that Line had mistaken the image of the sun reflected from an inner surface, for that produced by light refracted in passing directly through

the prism. The Royal Society confirmed Newton's claim. Robert Hooke, the Curator of the Society, was ordered to perform the experiment during one of the meetings. It was carried out "according to Mr. Newton's directions and succeeded, as he all along had asserted it would do: and it was ordered that Mr. Oldenburg should signify this success to those of Liège."

Line did not live to read Oldenburg's letter. On 25 November 1675 he died "of the epidemical disease, which then raged through so many countries," as a letter from John Gascoigne, one of his pupils, informed the Royal Society. To the very end of his life, Line had maintained his interest in the sciences. Besides engaging in the controversy with Newton, he took part, just three months before his death, in a public discussion on the cause of rainbows. An account of the discussion was later published in the *Transactions*. He completed also in that year a work on clocks and dials which is still in manuscript in Liège.

The controversy with Newton did not end with Line's death. It was continued by Gascoigne and by Fr. Anthony Lucas, the professor of mathematics at Liège. Though Lucas was obliged to admit the success of Newton's experiment, he proposed further objections to the theory of light. Newton replied to these rather wearily, suggesting that there was no point in pursuing a long and tedious argument; if Lucas had any difficulties they would be resolved if he but tried the experiment exactly as described in previous letters. Thus, unsatisfactorily, the controversy ended.

Line's pupils took care of his dials, as well as of his controversy, for some time after his death. By the end of the century, however, this care had lapsed. The last we hear of the dials is in a letter from Dr. Edward Tyson to the Royal Society, in 1703. He had visited the College of Liège, he wrote, and found that Line's dials, "the original of those formerly in our Privy Garden, are shamefully gone to decay, none remaining of use, but that which distinguishes the hours by feeling, and the globe which shows it in all other parts of the world. Here is but one in the Society that understands anything of this matter, and he is endeavouring to make a weather dial, that shall have a flux and reflux like the sea." One man at least was following in Line's footsteps.

# EVOLUTION TO-DAY

By

BERNARD TOWERS

MANY AND VARIED have been the books on Evolution published in recent months to celebrate the centenary of the Darwin-Wallace communications to the Linnaean Society concerning their theory of evolution by Natural Selection. It was the stimulus provided by Darwin's theories of the *mechanisms* of the evolutionary process which led to the general adoption in the nineteenth century, of the much wider and more fundamental notion that biological evolution is factually true.

The idea that a process of gradual evolution might account for the observable diversity of living forms has a history as old as the recorded history of human thought. The philosophical and theological implications of this idea, as contrasted with its only alternative, the idea of the "special creation" of each of the countless numbers of recognisable "species" that now exist and of the far more numerous "species" that once existed and are now extinct, have been debated by Christian writers ever since the time of the Fathers. There is no question, for instance, that to St. Augustine, with his concept of seminal ratios, the notion of the special creation of things as a way of accounting for their coming into being was quite unacceptable, even absurd. But until comparatively recently the idea of evolution was essentially a speculative one, a theory concerning which reasonable men might justifiably differ in their conclusions. If Special Creationism seemed to some a most unlikely way for Divine Providence to act in the world, yet in the absence of definite evidence to the contrary it was clearly an alternative possibility, and one which allowed for a literal reading of the account of creation given in Genesis. The situation so far as the science of biology was concerned was much the same as had been that in speculative astronomy during the time, before Galileo, when the Ptolemaic and Copernican theories were debated as alternatives, with the balance of evidence favouring the Ptolemaic account.

What Galileo did for Copernican astronomy, Charles Darwin did for evolutionary biology. Immediately before Darwin's time the vast majority of biologists, schooled in the tradition of Linnaeus and Cuvier, had joined with non-scientific philosophers and theologians in accepting as fact the Linnaean dogma of the fixity of species, and hence of the doctrine of special creation as the only conceivable way of accounting for their existence. After the publication of Darwin's careful observations on the degrees of diversity of biological forms and his theories to account for them by a process of "modification by descent" the final vindication of the general theory of evolution was assured.

In the century that has followed, and particularly in the last quarter of the century, quite remarkable advances have been made in our understanding of the nature of the evolutionary process, and we see that Darwin in fact was often more right than were the "Darwinists" who followed him and who popularised certain aspects of his work. Darwin's genius as a scientist, his capacity for achieving high levels of abstract conceptual reasoning while nevertheless giving full weight to those facts which he patiently collected throughout his professional life, are today becoming more and more apparent. His place amongst that select company that includes Newton and Einstein is now beyond question.

The British Academy *Lecture on a Master Mind* for 1958 was devoted to Charles Darwin, and was delivered by Sir Gavin de Beer. The observation was made therein that "scarcely a day passes without the appearance of new evidence confirming the truth of the theory of evolution up to the hilt, and it is now universally accepted except by those who are too ignorant or too idle to acquaint themselves with the facts, or too obsessed by irrational considerations to follow scientific evidence wherever it may lead." There must be quite a lot of Catholics, readers perhaps of this article, who will either cringe under the lash of such criticism or who will be driven by it to even further extremes of so-called "rationalisation" in self-justification.

But let them not despair, either of themselves or of pontificating scientists. There has recently been published on this subject a careful and well-balanced book<sup>1</sup> in the "Pelican" series. For a total financial outlay of three shillings and sixpence (the

<sup>1</sup> *The Theory of Evolution*, by John Maynard Smith (Penguin Books 3s 6d).

intellectual outlay will be heavier since the book merits, demands indeed, many hours of close and concentrated study), it is now open to all to "acquaint themselves with the facts" at least. Cases involving obsession with "irrational considerations" are, of course, more difficult to treat.

The book is no light-hearted popular account of the subject. The author took a first degree in Engineering, and has brought to his professional studies in biology a penetrating mind that delights in the exactitudes of mechanics and mathematics. He warns his lay-readers in advance:

Before starting a formal training in biology, I had read a number of books about evolution, some intended primarily for specialists and some for laymen. Although there were always, in the former kind, passages which I could not follow, I found such books more satisfying than those written for laymen, since in the latter I had always the feeling that difficulties were being slurred over. I have tried to avoid this fault. Although I have not assumed any specialised knowledge in the reader, and when possible have drawn my examples from familiar animals and plants, I have not omitted any subjects merely because they are difficult.

It is no longer profitable or even possible to discuss evolutionary theory in the general terms that were used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The reader of this book must be prepared, with due assistance from the author, to grapple with technical terms such as *allotetraploid*, *heterosis*, *phenotype* and *translocation*, to mention but a few. He must also be ready to follow the mathematical reasoning involved in studies of changes in population-structure, and to understand that different factors will be involved as between a community which is small and isolated and one which is large and freely interbreeding. Evolutionary trends and possibilities are markedly affected by such matters, and they are of the utmost significance for students of *human* evolution. But this book contains very little of the evidence for evolutionary trends in our own species—the author has quite properly devoted himself to those aspects of evolutionary theory for which experimental and statistical evidence is fairly complete and correspondingly compelling. While it is inevitable that scientific understanding of each and every process that has occurred during two thousand million years of biological evolution will always be incomplete, and hence open to



attack on specific points, yet the positive evidence concerning the underlying causes of biological modifications and of their retention or rejection by the sieve of natural selection is so strong, that he would have to be a curiously irrational reader who failed to give to the modern account a fair degree of credence.

It should be recorded that Maynard Smith commits himself with scarcely any reserve to the orthodox and rather rigid school of so-called "neo-Darwinian" genetical theory. It is true that members of this school have, with a certain amount of justification, called themselves exponents of a "modern synthesis." And yet scientific observations have been made in very recent times which cannot, it would seem, be accommodated within the strictly neo-Darwinian nexus of hypothesis and theory. The author leaves out of account those experimental findings which indicate that modifications induced in animal cells during ontogeny (*i.e.*, so-called "acquired characters") are in fact, in some instances at least, incorporated into the genetic make-up and handed on to future generations. Perhaps he felt that these findings were too recent to justify inclusion in a book of this sort. But one has the feeling that in his discussion of "Nature and Nurture" he mentions the possibility of such reactions only in order to dismiss them as highly unlikely, as any orthodox neo-Darwinian must. Darwin himself would not have done so, and it may well be that the next decade or two will see those aspects of Lamarckism which Darwin found acceptable becoming once again scientifically respectable. This will lead to the development of a synthesis of hypotheses at a higher level of generality, a process typical of scientific advance.

It is a matter for considerable puzzlement, and deep regret, that at a time when evolutionary theory is making such tremendous strides in the world of the professional biologist, the subject is regarded with such suspicion and even open hostility by so many Catholics in this country. It is undeniable that in recent years Evolution has had rather a "bad press" in English Catholic newspapers and periodicals, much worse than in any other group of publications—though of course there is always a lunatic fringe hovering around any community. Recent treatment in the Catholic press compares so unfavourably with what appears to have been the case more than fifty years ago that one's sense of bewilderment increases.



Catholic opposition to the scientific theory cannot derive basically from philosophical or theological objections for, as was said above, St. Augustine, and before him St. Gregory of Nyssa, would have seen the theory as an eminently reasonable one. The metaphysical and theological need to speak of a "Creator and Sustainer of all things" is in no sense in conflict with the natural scientist's urge to discover and describe *how* effects come about in nature. The fact that the theory of evolution has been developed and expounded with great force by avowed atheists and agnostics has little bearing on the validity of the scientific findings themselves. But perhaps some of our Catholic activists feel an urge, when they read an article by a prominent agnostic dealing ostensibly with his professional scientific work but in a manner highly charged with philosophical overtones, to refute not merely the anti-theological background to the article but the facts of the subject-matter themselves? They would do well to ponder the advice of St. Augustine<sup>1</sup> on the need to avoid this type of criticism. Much the same view was expressed by Mgr. J. A. O'Brien in the preface to his book *Evolution and Religion*.<sup>2</sup> Criticising some of the writings on this subject "from the pens of religious leaders," he says:

They have been largely concerned with minimising the force of the scientific evidence, playing upon occasional disagreements among the scientists concerning details in the converging lines of evidence—details usually inconsequential in their bearing upon the fundamental issue—and in general seeking to cast discredit upon the data presented and, at times, even ridicule upon those presenting the same.

It is this type of cheap and ineffective (except to the unlearned) criticism that brings the Church into disrepute in those circles where the calm search for and appraisal of objective truth are regarded as amongst the highest of human aspirations.

It is noteworthy that in the quarrel of last century between certain agnostic scientists and the churchmen of the period, Catholic clergymen were not by any means always to be found deep in the reactionary ranks. David Lack, in his recent book *Evolutionary Theory and Christian Belief* (1957) writes: "So far as I am aware the first substantial and sympathetic appraisal of

<sup>1</sup> In *De Genesi ad litteram* lib. I, cap. XIX.

<sup>2</sup> New York, 1931.

animal evolution by an ecclesiastic was that in the *Dublin Review* for 1871 by the Roman Catholic Canon Hedley." That essay, together with a commentary by Abbot Butler on it and on some later writings on evolution by Bishop Hedley, was reprinted in book form in 1931. The story is there told by Abbot Butler of the opposition to the bishop's position from some ecclesiastical quarters. A fuller account of a curious history, in which a further step was taken by the recent Pope when he admitted the possibility even of "the development, from other living matter already in existence, of the human body," was given by Dr. E. C. Messenger in his *Evolution and Theology* (1932) and its sequel *Theology and Evolution* (1949). The late Dr. Messenger was also responsible for the English translation of Canon Dorlodot's *Darwinism and Catholic Thought* (1922), in which is recounted the tremendous effect made in 1909 by Dorlodot when, as representative of the Catholic University of Louvain, he gave his laudatory address to the Cambridge congress that was celebrating the centenary of Darwin's birth. He comments that the "address sounded just the right note in the opinion of all the Catholics present, and was subsequently given publicity in the *Tablet*." Forty-nine years later a much larger International Congress of Zoology met in London to celebrate the centenary of Darwin's first publication on evolution. There was nothing comparable, so far as Catholics were concerned, to the events recounted by Canon Dorlodot half a century previously.

Perhaps the reason for the apparent regress of Catholic appreciation in this country of this particular branch of science is to be found in the history of the development of evolutionary theory itself. After the rediscovery, at the turn of the century, of Mendel's work on heredity, there slowly developed a deep cleavage amongst professional biologists as to the principal agent concerned in the evolutionary process. The two camps comprised the "old-fashioned" Darwinian selectionists and the "up-to-date" Mendelian geneticists. For a good many years the Darwinists had rather a bad time of it, and during the 1920's a great deal of "good Catholic fun" was to be had by the Chesterbelloc and its followers by quotation of isolated statements from different scientists who clearly failed to see eye to eye both as to fact and its interpretation. Absurdities abounded and were gleefully exposed. Unhappily, there are some Catholics today who

are still unaware, it would seem, that these scientific contradictions and disagreements were resolved nearly thirty years ago. The new era was ushered in with a book by Professor Sir Ronald Fisher with the fitting title *The Genetical Theory of Selection* (Oxford, 1930). The earlier disputes have long since passed into the history of the development of modern biological theory, and their place has been taken by others as indicated above. But there are still to be found Catholic writers who are prepared to quote from the giants and dwarfs of the past as if their views bore direct relevance to the scientific issues of today.

If there should be any readers of this article who, hesitant about the validity of the general theory of Evolution, find themselves familiar only with pre-1930 versions of the theory, they would, unhappily but necessarily, qualify for the first half of the stricture quoted above from de Beer's British Academy lecture. One hopes they might acquire the book under review. And read it.

## COMEDY AND TRAGEDY IN CHRISTOPHER FRY

BROADWAY CRITICS some time ago declared themselves puzzled or uncertain as to Christopher Fry's sole tragedy, *The Firstborn*. It had not left them with that rosy glow which most of this playwright's work diffuses. When, in the autumn of 1950, his comedy, *The Lady's not for Burning*, was performed, New York showed itself quick on the up-take. Whereas, stated *Time*, *The Cocktail Party* had "sent the audience stumping out of the theatre on its knees, pricing bad bargains out of the corner of its eye, Fry's audience pranced out into the welcoming night their eyes peeled for a pretty girl to hug or a fellow being to clap on the shoulder." Certainly *The Firstborn* is not in this pattern. It hasn't the bouquet and Happy Birthday touch. It is more like an Elizabethan Chekhov—a blank-verse *Cherry Orchard* with the death-beetle ticking.

The obvious remark at this point is that the plays are in different genres; *The Lady's not for Burning* being written on comedic, *The Firstborn* on tragic lines. But Fry in fact has so made free with tragic and comic ingredients that this elementary distinction doesn't hold. All of his comedies skim close to death. In *A Phoenix too Frequent*

the young Roman corporal is nearly court-martialled for a capital offence, and there is some gruesome play with corpses as well as a necrophilic desire for immolation on the lady's part. In *Venus Observed* the Duke's observatory is set on fire by a jealous ex-mistress, and the Duke and Perpetua are almost burned alive. In *The Lady's not for Burning* the heroine escapes over-night from the faggots and the stake in company with a war-sickened captain who so despaired of life that he desired to be hung. Fry's last comedy, *The Dark is Light Enough*, sails even nearer the coast of shadows and at two places touches shore. The Countess Rosmarin dies on the stage, her quietist task of restoring confidence to neurotic Richard Gettner accomplished. He, in his turn, gives himself up to the army from which he has deserted, perhaps to receive a penalty of death.

Hairbreadth escapes from the direst fate are, of course, the comic dramatist's stock-in-trade; but with Fry this rescue-in-the-nick-of-time is not, we see, invariably forthcoming. The wings of the angel of death are heard, and the pinions in this play do not pass over. To affix labels and term Fry's dramas "tragi-comedies" like Beaumont and Fletcher's, or to use Byron's epithet "serio-comedy" does not get us very far. Of these two, the last is the best. It does at least suggest an underlying meaning, an end far removed from the purpose of farce. "Progress," writes the playwright in a note of dedication to his festival drama *A Sleep of Prisoners*, "is the growth of vision: the increased perception of what makes for life and what makes for death," and he goes on to state how he has sought "to find a way for comedy to say something of this, since comedy is an essential part of men's understanding." Here Fry makes his position quite clear. We assume from the run of humorous plays that comedy as a dramatic form concerns itself with society's conventions, and—for all its ironies—finally respects the "appearance" of things. We think perhaps of Molière—that mocker of hypocrisy from the standpoint of bourgeois virtue. We understand it as the art *par excellence*, *pour amuser les honnêtes hommes*. But Pascal knew that the poet is not to be classed as an *honnête homme*; and Fry's comic vision is essentially poetic: an exploration, not a static assessment. Fry himself has resorted to this word to describe the human task when confronted by mass danger.

Thank God our time is now when wrong  
Comes up to face us everywhere,  
Never to leave us till we take  
The longest stride of soul men ever took.  
Affairs are now soul size.  
The enterprise  
Is exploration into God

declares the old ex-donkeyman Private Meadows in *A Sleep of Prisoners*. All Fry's dramatic enterprise constitutes an "exploration into God"; and if the zany jingling of his verse, his puns, his wit, his virtuosity have left the suppered theatregoer only with a eupeptic aftermath the fault is not with the text and its actors. "I could see no reason," wrote Fry, of that "first cousin to an artificial comedy" *The Lady's not for Burning*, "why I should not treat the world as I see it, a world in which we are all poised on the edge of eternity, a world which has deeps and shadows of mystery, in which God is anything but a sleeping partner." Here, indeed, was the recipe for an artificial comedy with a difference. Fry's West-end theatrewise sense—the sparkle and smartness of his repartee—have sometimes led his more surface-minded fans to look upon him as a verse Noel Coward. His translation of Jean Anouilh—that light-fingered pierrot of the poetic—undoubtedly strengthened this belief. Fry is the playwright, it was commonly assumed, who could spout in metaphor and still stay slick. Many London audiences give the impression that they have not forgathered to think. To feel, they consider, is burden enough. The West-end theatre appears to exist as an evening nursery for the mentally middle-aged. Gentle excitement, then bland reassurance is what stacks up the box-office till. To write a comedy for those who have come for this weak pabulum is hardly stimulating. Fry has got by with it by supplying all the titillating condiments and dressings. And those who have raved about his tinsel and rococo have been quite content to forgo the central substance.

Just what this is cannot be expressed in any ready formula, but there is something of the paradox about it—a sense of dialectical incongruities. We get this hinted at in the comedies when Doto the tipsy maid-servant (in *A Phoenix too Frequent*) tells the taking and bewildered young soldier:

life and death  
Is cat and dog in this double-bed of a world.

In *The Firstborn* this under-play of opposites assumes a more brooding dress of words, as when Moses declares:

I do not know why the necessity of God  
Should feed on grief: but it seems so. And to know it  
Is not to grieve less, but to see grief grow big  
With what has died, and in some spirit differently  
Bear it back to life.

Or, again, when he is tempted to see "Man's life go forward only by guilt and guilt."



Kierkegaard puts the matter in this fashion. The paradox or the inexplicable, he says, is a category on its own. "It is the duty of the human understanding to understand that there are things which it cannot understand, and what those things are. Human understanding has vulgarly occupied itself with nothing but understanding, but if it would only take the trouble to understand itself at the same time it would simply have to posit the paradox." One is reminded by this passage of Peter Able's prayer for assistance while dicing with a fellow private in the dream-scenes of *A Sleep of Prisoners*:

Deal me high, deal me low.  
 Make my deeds  
 My nameless deeds.  
 I know I do not know.

"I know I do not know"—here, in this line, is man's humility, his awe, before the divine and the numinous. And all of Fry's art is finally bent on communicating some intimation of the luminous assenting ignorance of this fact. To convey this resonance of acceptance and non-knowledge calls for a special mode of art. As Wittgenstein has remarked, "What can be shown, cannot be said . . . There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical." Revelatory rather than reasoned (though argument follows from this revelation), Fry's drama seeks to preserve a sense of inextricable oppositions. His four comedies are all tugs-of-war between the life—and death-instincts. A woman mourns a husband and decides to die; a mercenary soldier, sick of carnage, despises life and desires to be hanged; an old philanderer, hardened in selfhood, despairs of resolving love by marriage; a *manqué* poet deserts from duty, fearing the dead self he bears inside him. In each of these comedies, Thanatos makes a tough stand before the conquering Eros; and in the last *The Dark is Light Enough*, both life and death triumph as the curtain descends.

Fry has described tragedy as a demonstration of man's dilemma, and comedy as a comment upon this demonstration. The definition serves to show his sense of the closeness between these two forms, and the reason why the tragic so often overlaps the determining element in his comedies.

*The Firstborn* was Fry's second published play (*The Boy with a Cart* being first off the line); and I remember with what brooding attention its author would regard the script when we were both in the Forces. Down by the banks of the Avon, at Pershore, Fry would take his drafts and pore upon them when exigencies of khaki allowed him time off. Written during the War, it reflects the debate between authority and freedom as embodied in the characters of Pharaoh and



Moses. In the language of current politics, the play can be seen as an impassioned plea for self-determination—an assertion of the rights of the Jewish race to evolve their own ethos under providential contract. As Moses tells the Pharaoh:

My people shall become themselves,  
By reason of their own god who speaks within them.

But Seti the Pharaoh, who represents the supremacy of Egypt and its great imperial past, cannot understand this awakening ethnic logic, and determines to hold Moses's countrymen by force. Freedom wins the day as *Exodus* proclaims, but at a cost of waste and devastation. Besides the plagues which smite Egypt, the Pharaoh is left a shattered man, his beloved son the heir-apparent struck down by the Angel of Death along with all the first-born of the land.

Part of the magnitude of the play comes from the fact that the Pharaoh is presented not as a consciously evil man. He has sacrificed all—his health, his peace of mind, his family affection—to dynastic causes, to the civilising mission of Egypt and its traditionally vast historical role. Pharaoh's dilemma is the dilemma which comes to all rulers of empire. But Egypt's day is closing. It is later than he thinks. His son Ramases, before his death, is sacrificed also to this absolutist burden. Rebelliously, he expostulates with his father:

I'm to inherit the kingdom  
Of desperate wishes, to be not myself  
But a glove disguising your hand. Is there nowhere  
Where I can come upon my own shape  
Between the overbearing ends of Egypt?  
Where am I to look for life?

Moses, too, carries the scars of renouncing his private life to redeem his people. As he says to Pharaoh's son who pleads on behalf of plague-harried Egypt:

You appeal to Moses,  
But Moses is now only a name and an obedience.

He has offered up his individual hopes—his love and ambitions—for his race. From the Bible we may guess at the honoured position which Moses perhaps held in the royal household; and Fry imagines him as a general who has served with renown in the Egyptian forces. He imagines, likewise, a deep love-tie between Pharaoh's sister the Princess Anath and Moses (who as a girl she had discovered in the cradle of bulrushes). This, also, goes overboard in the terrible lust of Egypt to hold, the burning desire of the Jews to be free.

A religious and historical drama of moment, *The Firstborn* is very much a play for the time. It speaks to a world whose problems include Cyprus, Algiers, Hungary, and Poland. And it speaks in a prophetic but non-party voice. *The Firstborn* deals with the tyranny of power, but does not over-simplify things by making the Pharaoh the villain of the piece. Instead, it shows him as a dedicated man dominated by imperial abstractions—by notions which history was seeking to transcend. Least known, it is probably the finest of Fry's works.

DEREK STANFORD

## REVIEWS

### MORE SAINTS

*Simon called Peter*, by Mother Mary Simeon, S.H.C.J. (Browne and Nolan 12s 6d).

*Saints and Ourselves*, edited by Philip Caraman, S.J. (Hollis and Carter 15s).

*The Life of St. John of the Cross*, by Crisógono de Jesus, O.C.D., translated by Kathleen Pond (Longmans. Illustrated library edition 45s; pocket-sized edition, text and index only, 18s).

THE RENEWAL of interest in the lives of saints is the more remarkable because the old *genre vie-de-saint* fell into as bad repute for uncritical pietism as did the commercial production of devotional objects. But happily serious critical study of the lives of saints was going on, though at first it was feared that such lives would so have the supernatural element rinsed out of them that the dry bones of historical fact would leave nothing for our love or veneration. But men and women, intelligent but not iconoclasts, were found who could write honest accounts of the saints such as to enable readers to believe what was written and willingly to worship. So much is in the gospels about St. Peter that we need not regret our lack of information about his later years. *Simon called Peter* consists of short meditations on what the Evangelists tell us: they are lovingly thought-out, with no illegitimate embroidery, and followed by brief prayers, sincere, to the point, and with no conventional phrasing. In this way we really get to know at any rate this one saint, and, dare I say, "make use of him." The vigorous black-and-white "decorations" (by J. F. Kelly, R.H.A.) are stylised without affectation.

*Saints and Ourselves* is a third series of "personal studies" by writers of note, reprinted from THE MONTH. Of the first series, *The Times Literary Supplement* said that they were written "in terms of (the

subject's) own times, of ours, and of eternity." This series has not degenerated, though any such short sketches must needs be selective, and so reveal also the writers' preferences. The chapter on St. James of Compostella (by Walter Starkie) cannot but repose (after the Gospel-period) on legend; yet there is usually a grain of historical fact in any massive legend: perhaps this, and the chapter on St. Malachy (Gerard Murphy) have least that can concern "ourselves"; but the history of St. Gregory the Great (Nicolette Gray), and to some degree of St. Basil (Anne Fremantle), should be part of any Catholic schooling; it is to our shame that we practically ignore St. Thomas of Canterbury (Leslie Macfarlane). St. Monica shows, till towards the end, little that is not "natural" and is written of, shrewdly yet sensitively, by Muriel Spark; St. Catherine of Siena (Alice Curtayne) was human indeed, yet throughout so illuminated by the supernatural that often she seems but "mote-like in Thy mighty glow," the extreme of frailty and of heavenly strength. Fr. James Brodrick, S.J., is now added to those who have rescued St. Bernadette from her long eclipse: she, like the Saint of Lisieux, provides a grave lesson to self-satisfied superiors. St. Ignatius (H. O. Evennett) and St. Francis Borgia (Sir Arnold Lunn) remain enigmatic figures till we realise how the former was *transitional* between a medieval world in which he had his roots and the "new" world which he did not really like, a mystic who *suffered* from his vocation to be a practical organiser; Borgia remained a Spanish grandee despite himself, and also, had to be forcibly checked in his yearning for solitude while unable *not* to rule. We do not think that the official "recognition" of the Empress's dead body had any deep effect on him; while his retirement from court life was due to the snub inflicted on him and his wife by the Portuguese king and queen. Mr. A. C. F. Beales most interestingly places St. Joseph de Calanz aright in the history of education. Mr. Hugh Ross Williamson places St. Benedict Joseph Labre in *his* place in the eighteenth century, not only by wisely discussing his extraordinary vocation, but by linking him up with contemporary incidents or persons—for example, Mozart, who at the end of the Lent when Labre died destitute, fell into ecstasies because the "sacristan" Emperor Joseph II had been present at his concert, had applauded, and sent the composer twenty-five ducats (rather mean, Mozart felt, but well compensated by the imperial applause). The Editor must be congratulated for having met with a response from so remarkable a team of collaborators, all lay men or women save one!

Padre Crisógono was born in 1904 and died suddenly in 1945 the very day after a prize had been decreed to him in Madrid for the best Life of St. John of the Cross. This book cannot but be for a long time the definitive "life," containing as it does much material inaccessible even to the late Professor Allison Peers, though the saint wrote much

that even now may be waiting discovery. This is a biography, and does not set out to analyse St. John's mystical doctrine on which he has set his own unmistakable stamp despite the many books he read. Nor does it discuss his poems as literature. But it enables us to follow him step by step through a Spain so little changed (the "jacket," by Mr. D. Tindle, really does express a typically arid scene, the simple white red-tiled houses, the massive church, the stones, the thorns). You must be ready to harmonise austerity with common sense; ecstasy with gaiety (and, in St. Teresa at any rate) even with sardonic humour; St. John's cult of "Nothing" with his intense enjoyment of natural beauty. In short, you must perform the heroic task of thinking with a Spanish mind, especially when reading of the cruelties inflicted on the saint by men vowed to God. But all these books so enchant you with God's saints that you can join in God's own joy in His handiwork.

C. C. MARTINDALE

#### PETER AND PAUL

*Petrus und seine Zeit*, by Paul Gaechter, S.J. (Tyrolia Verlag, Innsbruck sch 125).

**T**HIS VOLUME is the fruit of many years' close study of the Apostolic Age, with special reference to the structure of the Church. The author, who is Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the University of Innsbruck, is no stranger to this country, having lectured for a time at Heythrop before the war, and he features among the authorities used in the *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*. Most of the chapters in this volume were first published as articles in the *Innsbruck Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, but they deserved to be given a more permanent form alongside the fresh material which is considerable and important.

If the whole is a technical, detailed, and closely reasoned analysis of the New Testament data in the light of the mentality and customs of the time, it has aspects of considerable interest for others besides the professional theologian. If our Lord repeated three times "Feed my lambs," it was because what gave juridical acts their efficacy and permanence was their threefold repetition in the presence of witnesses.

The importance of "the Twelve" is brought out by the appointment of Matthias to replace Judas, an importance that dominates the whole book. A perfectly new significance is given to "the Seven" whom we have been accustomed to call Deacons: they correspond rather to coadjutor bishops in modern times, co-opted to help the Twelve in their work, with certain reservations of power at first. They and their like came to be known as "presbyters" in Jerusalem, and if James was appointed first monarchical bishop there, those of the Seven who

created new Christian centres became *ipso facto* monarchical bishops, as for instance Philip did at Caesarea. Throughout, Peter remains in control and, moreover, his famous dispute with Paul at Antioch is given a new interpretation. After all, we have only Paul's version of the incident, and so only one side of the question. The author ventures to maintain that on the real point at issue, which was one not of principle but of policy, it was Peter who was right and that Paul's angry outburst was misplaced. Such a view might seem to call in question Paul's inspiration when he wrote that Peter "was to be blamed," but the author at least makes out a case for holding that the Catholic teaching on the inspiration of the Scriptures is left intact even so.

But far and away the most unexpected results emerge from the long, new chapter which concludes these studies. It is entitled "The Limitations of Paul's Apostleship." As preacher, theologian, mystic, St. Paul's pre-eminence is left unimpaired, it is even perhaps enhanced; what is called in question is his standing as an Apostle on a level with the Twelve. It is impossible, nor would it be fair, to summarise the long closely-knit argument of over a hundred pages by which the author is led to this conclusion: that Paul belongs to the second generation of Christians and that the authority which he came to exercise in the Church was due to no direct investiture by Christ on the road to Damascus (important as that vision was), but to a commission from the representatives of the Twelve—wider no doubt in scope than, but similar in kind to, that of many an active missionary of those days. He was not, then, the thirteenth of the Twelve Apostles; both in doctrine and in authority he depended on his predecessors—he was one of the first, if the greatest, of the links in the chain of tradition which began with them.

Everyone will see from these indications that the book presents us with much that is new. It deals in the course of its development with most of the modern presentations of the early Church which, deliberately or not, tend to undermine the Catholic Church's position; it adopts what modern scholarship has added to the "interconfessional pool" as it may be called, yet re-asserts with unexampled vigour the importance to the early Church itself of the juridical authority of its officials, whether of the Twelve or of the humblest missionary. This is, of course, anathema to most non-Catholic writers on the primitive Church, and the reactions to what Fr. Gaechter had already published are a presage of the reception which the book as a whole will meet with at their hands.

At the same time Catholic students will not always feel that they can go all the way with him. At times a long chain of argument depends on some fact which he has proved to his own satisfaction, but about



which his readers may have reason to entertain doubts still. The book is sure to provoke considerable discussion among Catholics themselves, for he has called attention to a number of facts which have been overlooked or only cursorily treated in the past, but which can no longer be ignored. Whether all his positions come to be accepted or not, the stimulus to thought which he has provided cannot but be beneficial.

If it did nothing more, his book would be a speaking disproof of the accusation so often lazily made, that Catholic biblical scholars cannot think for themselves, and that to be a Catholic is to commit intellectual suicide.

MAURICE BÉVENOT

### CENSORSHIP

*Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship*, by Harold C. Gardiner, S.J.  
(Hanover House, Garden City, New York \$2.95).

CENSORSHIP like the Spanish Inquisition or religious intolerance is one of those difficulties which are constantly put to Catholics. Most can be turned quite skilfully by any able debater. All can be wriggled out of; but the process is not always particularly satisfactory. The purveyor of slick answers enjoys indeed a temporary triumph, but knows, at the same time, that what he lacks so often is depth. That is not a pleasant sensation. Neither is he always too sure of the real answer to the difficulty with which he has been presented. Instinctively, he realises that his own lack of certainty has communicated itself in his answer, however skilfully presented. As a result he suffers the disappointment of realising, often quite correctly, that his opponent, though temporarily worsted, has not yet even begun to be convinced.

Fr. Gardiner, I imagine, could have turned this book on censorship into a slick, controversial operation. But that is just what he has not done, and it is greatly to his credit that he has not done so. Instead, he has relied very wisely on a patient and clear explanation of the Catholic position with regard to this all-important question. Because he has written in this fashion, Fr. Gardiner can be sure that others besides Catholics will be attracted by his elucidation of principle and the admirable way in which he writes on the relationship between law and freedom. That done, he turns to the current American scene and examines, in particular, the operations of two American Catholic organisations whose operations are closely connected with this question—the National Legion of Decency, which has to do with films, and the National Office of Decent Literature whose title makes its work quite obvious. Fr. Gardiner examines the difficulties these organisations are under, studies the problems involved in their



work and, in the concluding pages of his admirable book, offers helpful advice and suggestions.

This book, I believe, will prove very helpful to many engaged in related work in this country. There is a great deal connected with this matter of censorship and with the maintenance of sound moral standards in films, on TV and in books, which cannot be easily decided. Those interested in these questions will find in Fr. Gardiner's pages a great deal of sound advice. They will find also a most pleasing urbanity of manner which will lead them to place confidence in his judgment. It is, I think, this note of quiet assurance, which is, perhaps, the most impressive thing about this latest piece of Fr. Gardiner's writing. He makes his points precisely because it is so clear that he is never consciously striving to do so. It is a sign of weakness to shout at one's opponent. On this reckoning, Fr. Gardiner is a very strong man.

This is the way, one feels, that books dealing with controversial questions should certainly be written.

PAUL CRANE

### WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

*An Introduction to Western Philosophy*, by Russell Coleburt (Sheed and Ward 18s).

**S**PEAKING very generally, one can divide Introductions to Philosophy into two main types: the historical and the problematic. The present reviewer's preferences are for the problematic: the beginner must be made to see the difficulties, to puzzle and to wonder, a process which can be hindered by presenting him with various solutions and systems at too early a stage. There are many who can tell you what Plato or Aquinas held about the One and the Many, but who have never themselves been particularly disturbed about this central metaphysical problem. Not that we would wish to reduce the student to a state of existentialist Angst, or to an attitude of universal doubt: wonder entails neither the one nor the other, and should naturally elicit the humility that will of itself lead the beginner to the works of wiser men.

Mr. Coleburt steers a course between the problematic and the historical, a form of compromise which naturally invites criticism from either extreme. His work falls into four parts, the first dealing with "the broadest, as well as the most important, problem in all philosophy, the problem of the One and the Many." This is considered historically from its beginnings in pre-Socratic philosophy to its "climax" in the synthesis of St. Thomas Aquinas. Mr. Coleburt is, perhaps, at his

best in this part. The second part discusses the nature of man and his place in society: we travel from Plato to Marx, meeting Aquinas, Kant and Hegel on the way. The third part considers the problem of knowledge and follows the well-beaten track that leads from Descartes to Kant's first *Critique*. In the fourth and last part, entitled "The Nature and Limitations of Human Thought," existentialism and logical analysis are examined.

One must not complain: Mr. Coleburt does succeed in giving his readers a good general idea of the main preoccupations of Western philosophers, even if we fail fully to appreciate why they should have been so preoccupied. His exposition is generally clear and, in so far as the subject permits, simple: an exception must be made for his discussion of Kant's moral theory which caused this reviewer no little difficulty. He quotes freely from the works of the philosophers he discusses. The book is written from the standpoint of one who accepts the Christian revelation and the *philosophia perennis*. If, as we suspect, Mr. Coleburt has partly in mind the needs of scholarship candidates facing interviews at the University, he has succeeded in meeting those needs and in providing that general knowledge of Western philosophers that is required. But the book can be of more general use, and should attain a wider public.

A few detailed criticisms may be made. It is perhaps rather perverse of Mr. Coleburt to discuss Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* after his treatment of Logical Positivism. Mr. Coleburt has clearly no great affection for Hegel, but it is surely unjust to say that "he seems to have taken no account of Judaism." Hegel wrote at some length on the Jewish attitude to life. The Kantian use of "transcendental" is rather obscured by Mr. Coleburt's gloss on the word as it occurs in the passages quoted from the *Critique*. But points such as these do not affect one's general estimation of the work and it may be safely recommended to those who desire, in Mr. Coleburt's words, "a quick look round" Western philosophy. Some of them, we are sure, will be induced to take a deeper and a larger look, and a few may even find themselves actually philosophising.

PETER W. ROBINSON

## SHORTER NOTICES

*Speculation in Pre-Christian Philosophy*, by Richard Kroner (Longmans 16s).

IT IS Professor Kroner's belief that the relation between metaphysical speculation and revelation is the "nerve centre" of the history of philosophy up to Hegel. And he is engaged in writing a three-volume

survey of the development of western philosophy in the light of this conviction. The first volume, as its title indicates, deals with Greek thought. It ends with the Stoics or, more precisely, with Philo. Neo-Platonism is omitted, presumably because it does not belong, chronologically at least, to the pre-Christian era.

Obviously, the Greeks possessed neither the Jewish nor the Christian revelation. But Professor Kroner argues that metaphysical speculation in the Greek world developed as a protest against Greek polytheism "out of a peculiar half-mythological, half-intellectual intuition which took the place of a religious revelation in the biblical sense." But though speculation, in its general line of development, was opposed to polytheism, it was itself religiously inspired and orientated. And the author studies the relation, as manifested in Greek thought, between the purely intellectual and the religious approaches to the ultimate, divine reality. He also considers the theme of a *praeparatio evangelica* in Greek thought. In his view Philo transformed the Stoic Logos in such a way that the idea was rendered capable of application in Christian thought. "In Philo, Greek speculation and biblical revelation met for the first time to create a biblical speculation which initiated the course philosophy was to take in the subsequent fifteen centuries."

It will be seen that the author follows those writers, such as Werner Jaeger, who have emphasised the religious interests even of those early Greek philosophers who are sometimes depicted as being in essence primitive scientists. And there is doubtless room for a survey of western philosophy written from Dr. Kroner's point of view. As for Philo, the degree of importance which should be attached to him in particular in paving the way for Christian speculation is open to dispute. However, as far as we know it is true that with him "Greek speculation and biblical revelation meet for the first time."

*Body and Mind in Western Thought*, by Joan Wynn Reeves (Penguin Books 5s).

THE AIM of this book is to provide an introduction to the history of psychology and a vantage point from which to consider the present. As the title indicates, Dr. Reeves has concentrated one main theme, the relation between body and mind. The first part of the book is an historical introduction, while the second consists of selected passages, with some explanatory comment, from a variety of writers, ranging from Hippocrates to William James. Bibliographies are provided.

The work is designed to act as a pointer or guide to further study. In her comments Dr. Reeves is at pains to avoid dogmatism. Thus

while she suggests that a positive aspect of the modern movement of logical analysis is its freedom from the introduction of "metaphysical monsters," she wisely adds that "the danger of analysis is a defensive linguisticism which is self-defeating. It has been said, if men cannot live by bread alone neither can they live on antiseptic, and whether mind-body problems could be solved or dismissed by logic and linguistics *only* remains, as I have indicated, a very open question. Even the new logic should be a tool not a master."

There could, of course, be endless discussion about the selection of writers for quotation in a work of this sort. Some candidates for quotation are obvious enough; for example, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume. When we come to more recent times, however, there is room for considerable difference of opinion. But it would be out of place to discuss the question in a brief review. In any case the aim of the book is not to give an exhaustive account of psychological theories, but to provide material for the reader's personal reflections and a stimulus to further study.

Among the philosophers selected for quotation is St. Thomas Aquinas. Dr. Reeves's comments on Aquinas in her historical introduction are sympathetic. "His views on the ascent of man were founded on a notion of biological development in which the senses and natural functions did not stand from the start condemned. They are indeed integral to human perfection, and the significance of this point can hardly be over-stressed. Temperamentally St. Thomas was born to detest the Manichees and with them the spirit of negation."

*Concerning Human Understanding*, by Nikunja Vihari Banerjee (Allen and Unwin 30s).

THE SUB-TITLE of this book is *Essays on the Common-Sense Background of Philosophy*. And one of the author's contentions is that "for our knowledge of the external world we are solely dependent upon enlightened common sense, and that the age-old claim of philosophy to contribute to it is nugatory." With what, therefore, is philosophy concerned? With transcendent reality, with the Absolute, with God? Not at all. While not concerned to preach atheism, in the sense of attempting to destroy all religious belief, Professor Banerjee does not think that philosophy can admit God. In his view the problems which the philosophical arguments for God's existence purport to solve are not real problems; and the proposition affirming God's existence is not empirically verifiable. Philosophy has, however, a contribution to make through the consideration of man as a moral being, as bearer of values. And the religion advocated by the author is "the religion of man as revealed in the light of the wisdom of

Buddha and most prominently symbolised in the life of Jesus" (not, of course, regarded as incarnate God).

The author is professor of philosophy in the University of Delhi. India has a great philosophical tradition of her own. And what some of us expect from responsible Indian philosophers is an appropriation and constructive development of the metaphysical positions characteristic of Indian thought. We look, of course, for a development in the light of an intelligent appreciation of western criticism and analysis. Those of us who are serious philosophers, whether metaphysicians or not, certainly do not desire to have the "wisdom of the East" served up to us in the form of theosophical fantasy. But at the same time we hope for a contribution to metaphysics in the light of the original Indian tradition. And this is just what we so often fail to get. We are given instead the sort of intellectual meal which is frequently much better cooked and served in the west. To commit a flagrant mixing of metaphors, by publishing this book in England, Messrs. Allen and Unwin have brought coals to Newcastle.

*The Sovereign Flower*, by G. Wilson Knight (Methuen 30s).

WITH THIS BOOK Professor Wilson Knight brings to a close his Shakespearean studies. These first appeared in the middle-twenties, and the present volume collects together texts written as separate papers, or as portions of a larger work, to illustrate the main preoccupation of his theme. The longer of these interpret Shakespeare as the "Poet of Royalism," and make best sense against an Erastian-Anglican background. There is much here of England's imperial mission (written during a time of war) and much of monarchy understood within a *via media* culture. This is, perhaps, a way of saying that Professor Wilson Knight has a post-medieval mind. His approach makes for stimulating reading, but assent does not always follow upon it.

Many readers may believe that, in the body of these "Erastian" essays the writer is manipulating the poet to extra-literary ends. This would be a not-unjustified view. To see Professor Wilson Knight at his best, we should turn to his early paper "The Principles of Shakespeare Interpretation" (1928). Here, in this brilliant seven-page essay, with its neat five heads of approach, a whole world of Shakespearean studies, commenced or realised, is correctly forecast, including Miss Caroline Spurgeon's epoch-making thesis *Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells us* (1935). In this paper, Professor Wilson Knight claims that "Great tragedy is a statement, not a persuasion," and argues against the moralistic exegesis of Shakespeare's work. Some of us will feel that the critic's later writing have offended against this



canon by rifling rhetoric from the plays and poems to serve a non-literary cause. In a sense we may agree that Shakespeare is England: to equate him with the Constitution and the State, in its governmental aspects and its imperial ambitions, is possibly rather a different thing.

*This is the Mass*, as described by H. Daniel-Rops, celebrated by Fulton J. Sheen, photographed by Yousef Karsh (*The World's Work* 255).

THIS is primarily a book of pictures on the Mass. Those familiar with *Portraits of Fame* and his magnificent studies of Pope Pius XII, will be delighted to see Yousef Karsh following the example of so many great artists, and turning his attention to religious subjects. In the Mass, of course, he has a subject worthy of his talents.

No effort has been spared to produce a setting worthy of his pictures. The design of the book, the letterpress, the printing are all exquisite. Daniel-Rops's text is charming and varied. Inevitably with odd details the liturgical expert will disagree, but on the whole it is eminently successful—a nicely-balanced mixture of liturgical and historical learning, suffused with warmth and prayer. Then there is Bishop Sheen. Not only does he provide a model well-accustomed to the camera, but he contributes a thoughtful introduction as well.

But, really, it is the pictures that are the thing. It is a tragedy that these are not up to the standard of Karsh's best work. There are some half dozen of great beauty, filled with reverence and life. The rest, coming from such a genius, are disappointing. A number of factors contribute towards this, The ebullient pseudo-baroque of the setting, the server's nylon cotta and enormous bow, jar on the English reader; the glaring rubrical error on p. 109 tends to alienate the sympathy of the liturgist; and the "action" shots look rather static and posed. These are all accidental failings, really. At the root of it all is the failure of Karsh to get inside his subject. As a result, the accent falls on the model and the setting rather than on the priest and the worship of God.

*The Mass: A Liturgical Commentary*, Vol. I, by Canon A. Croegaert (Burns and Oates 30s).

WHILE not so full as the great work of Fr. Jungmann, this commentary by Canon Croegaert of Malines, the first volume of which covers the Mass of the Catechumens, will give students of the liturgy what they need of historical and practical instruction. At times the treatment is too hard and fast, as when a section promising us the facts on the origin of Sacramentaries gets over the problems of the Leonine in six lines without a mention of Spain or of *libelli*. "To say



*Amen* is to subscribe," one reads in the part where the collect is being explained, but it is a pity that this tag from Augustine is not illuminated a little further; what he meant was that the congregation by saying *Amen* (not at the collect but after the canon was complete) act like the *subscriptores* or seconders of a Bill in the Roman Senate who wrote their names as backers, after the name of the proposer, on the text of the Bill itself. The translation is on the whole well done, though one might be puzzled to find in Rome the "basilica of St. Saviour." For an index we must wait till Volume II is completed. This volume deals with such general matters as vestments, altar, bells and candles (with instruction on the lighting of "the big six"), but has nothing on the shape of churches or on the pen for epileptics and other *energumeni*, which some Eastern churches had (where the exorcists had to be in attendance during Mass) and which so much resembles the crying-pen of the modern American church.

*The Mass Through the Year: I*, by Aemiliana Löhr. Translated by I. T. Hale (Longmans 30s).

THIS VOLUME studies the Masses from the first Sunday in Advent to the Saturday in Passion Week, and seeks for the profounder realisation of the redemptive work of Christ applying itself through the liturgy to the Faithful. This implies not only careful meditation on the part of the reader but a high standard of education, so that if (as the book-jacket says) the book is for "every parish priest and religious teacher," it certainly is not for "every parent," most of whom will be baffled by words like *gnosis*, *pneuma*, or even *Logos*. Nor is it quite true to say that the author elucidates each item in each Mass; thus, alas, she eludes any translation of the Post-Communion in the second Christmas Mass (we agree, the sense is clear, but who could translate it?). Finally, the Mass-liturgy is at present intangible, but is not and never has been petrified: someday, e.g., the Offertory chant, now reduced as a rule to a single verse (not always meaningful in its place) might be modified, expanded, or eliminated. The Liturgy will grow in proportion as our understanding of Christ does.

*Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, by Hubert Jedin. Volume II (Herder n.p.).

UNTIL this second volume of Jedin's great history of Trent is translated, it will be necessary for anyone who wishes to understand the debates on justification, baptism, confirmation and the relative importance of tradition and scripture to go to this work in its German original. The final chapter of this volume is an indispensable guide to the documentary sources of the Council, diaries, acts,

correspondence and tracts. It covers the first seven sessions until the Council was suspended in 1547. This was the period when Cardinal Pole was present at the Council, and it saw his withdrawal just before the debate on justification began. Dr. Jedin shows great appreciation of Pole, whom he compares to Newman, but is still inclined to think, while granting Pole's ill-health, that he was somewhat out of sympathy with the decree as drafted. It does not seem quite safe to admit this while the second volume of Massarelli's diary (covering events at the Council from 15 October 1546 to 11 March 1547) is still lost to historians. The earlier portion of Massarelli's work is such a powerful corrective to vague gossip and one-sided remarks in letters that the loss of the later volume (last heard of in 1817 in the island of Corfu) must make the historian halt before drawing his conclusions. The history of a Council is a study of the activity of the Holy Ghost and of the shortcomings of human nature, and this book gives place to both.

*Eight Days*, by Gabriel Fielding (Hutchinson 16s).

MR. FIELDING is a Catholic novelist with a deep Catholic imagination. This means that, distinct from the drama of his work, it is the Catholic reader who should make most sense of it. Especially is this true of his latest book *Eight Days*.

Previous fictions by Mr. Fielding—*Brotherly Love* and *In the Time of Greenbloom*—developed the theme of alienation from God against a family-, school-, and college-background. *Eight Days* carries the process further. The scene of the novel is an International Zone in the district around Algiers. The characters—American, British, Jew, and Arab—exist in a Tower-of-Babel situation. All intimate exchange, psychological and verbal, is limited between them for a number of reasons. The novel deals with the death of language which overtakes men who woo a selfish darkness. Communication comes from loving one's neighbour: those who hate their fellows employ a private tongue.

Crooks, perverts, and psychopaths, sensation-seekers, and damners-of-their-souls crowd the claustrophobic pages of this novel. Men and women, denying their roots in sex, race, religion and God, seek an illusory make-believe heaven whose ways and mazes are those of hell. Spiritual melodrama is clearly Mr. Fielding's *forte*, and to it he brings a quality which melodrama traditionally lacks—a power of impassioned reflectiveness.

In the character of MacGrady he has created a fearful portrait of Catholic in-breeding (of knowledge without love, of belief without works). MacGrady, immersed in the teaching of the Church, does

daily violence to his being by a sustained sinning against the light. From the total destruction of his nature he is rescued by Chance, a convert prison-doctor. Chance is a man as accessible to the natural temptations of living as MacGrady is vulnerable to remoter aberrations. The strange co-operation and duel between them is a fascinating part of this fascinating book.

With all the raw products of a crude conversion story, Mr. Fielding has written a work subtle and deep in spiritual insight. He has mined, in *Eight Days*, whole new areas of religious sensibility for the art of the novel. His writing merits study, encouragement, and praise.

*The New Guest Room Book*, assembled by F. J. Sheed (Sheed and Ward 18s).

WE ALL have our own ideas about the ideal bedside book. Some prefer the straight detective story or thriller, some like to live for weeks with a large long serious novel, some of us read poetry, some like their literature light, others prefer something almost in the way of spiritual reading. Mr. Sheed in his new bedside book has tried to cater for all tastes. He confesses in his introductory note "that nobody will like everything in it, nobody except me, that is. But there is nothing in it that will not interest somebody."

He has cast his net very wide. Mr. Chesterton heads the team with some eighteen selections, beating even "Anon," who only manages eight, exactly the same as J. B. Morton. Although Catholic writers are overwhelmingly in the majority, there are a few representatives of non-Catholic literature. Oliver Goldsmith, William Shakespeare, A. P. Herbert to mention three of them. Even Swinburne has a couple of extracts.

As befits a Catholic publisher, Mr. Sheed's taste is pretty catholic. On the whole humorous pieces prevail, though there is one ghost story. Those who know Mr. Sheed's earlier collection will be grateful for this addition to what may well become a series. Others are encouraged to dip into this book, and once they start dipping they are likely to go on. After all even the humblest home does have the occasional guest and as Mr. Sheed says "A guest room without a book is a way of saying your guest can't read. They will not be pleased."

*A Dictionary of Saints*, compiled by Donald Attwater (Burns and Oates 30s).

FR. THURSTON was happy in having Mr. Attwater for collaborator, and to have been able to bequeath to his care the famous revision of Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*. For Mr. Attwater has

now revised the *Dictionary of Saints* first published in 1938, adding references to the revised Butler, so that anyone who chances on a name in this Dictionary and needs fuller information about the saint who bore it, knows at once where to look. Naturally these notices are kept as brief as possible: still, we wish that room could have been found, where possible, for a few adjectives or incidents bringing these saints to life, since many are doomed to remain little more than names.

*A Sense of the World*, by Elizabeth Jennings (Andre Deutsch 10s 6d).

FOR some years now Miss Jennings has been accepted as having in her the authentic stuff of poetry. In this latest collection of her work we recognise once more the technical mastery brought to bear on experience, to produce a deeply satisfying statement. We are moved not alone by the gems which are more than mere felicities of language, such as

The doves demur

or

For silence needs a shape in which to sink

or

And all the masks I carry on my face.

We are made aware of a deepening of the experience itself. Though she declares.

For me the senses still have their full sway

Even where prayer comes quicker than an act,

the last two subjects, "Augustine" and "Teresa of Avila" hint at future developments, as yet inchoate, but which may well add almost another dimension to her work.

*Covenant and Sacrifice*, by Basil Minchin (Longmans 10s 6d).

MR. MINCHIN, writing as an Anglican vicar of over twenty years of pastoral experience, proposes to issue a series of books intended to bring the Liturgy (of the Church of England) into a more vital connection with the people. Of course this involves a personal view of what Christ did at the Last Supper, of the meaning of sacrifice, and of what happens to the Bread and Wine as such. This in its turn involves a discussion of Jewish and indeed pagan rituals and the ideas they contained; and again, what happened during the religious revolution—Protestant in general, and English specifically. With the general wish to make the Eucharistic liturgy intelligible to and organically shared in by the Faithful, we are of course in sympathy, and even, with some of his criticisms, but not at all with his disapproval of "private" Masses. Christ being what He is, His priest cannot but

have with him, even if physically alone, all the members of Our Lord's mystical body, here or hereafter.

*The Mysteries of Lourdes*, by Ruth Cranston (Pan Books 2s 6d).

THIS BOOK is of value because it will reach a very wide public, and will convince readers that the fact of Lourdes cannot be justifiably disregarded. Mrs. Cranston, not herself a Catholic, has written a vivid account of the history of the shrine and of many cures about which she has carefully collected evidence. She has also outlined various theories proposed as accounting for those cures, and retains, herself, the conviction that a supra-mundane Force exists on which humanity can draw, achieving thereby results that can but be called "miraculous." And such a certainty, she holds, is what above all our modern generation, for which life has become so precarious, is in need of. She does not make it sufficiently clear (in view of her non-Catholic readers) that doctors are not asked to assert that any cure is supernatural, and that the Church herself does not and cannot define any miracle (outside of Scripture) to be "of faith."

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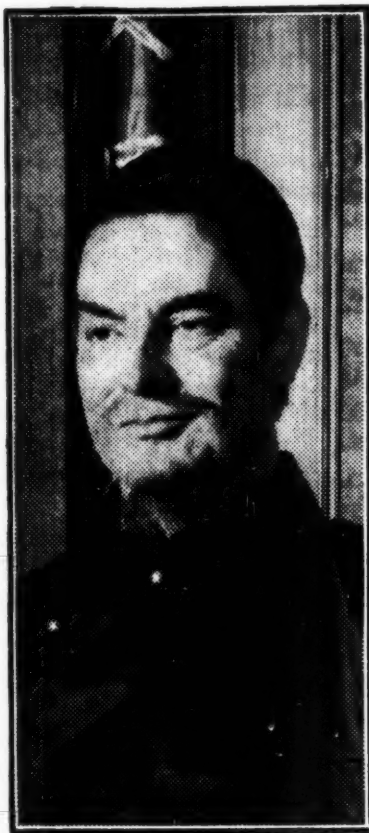
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**in THE CATHOLIC HERALD**

*\* Robert Donat as the Mandarin; taken from the review of "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness."*

ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

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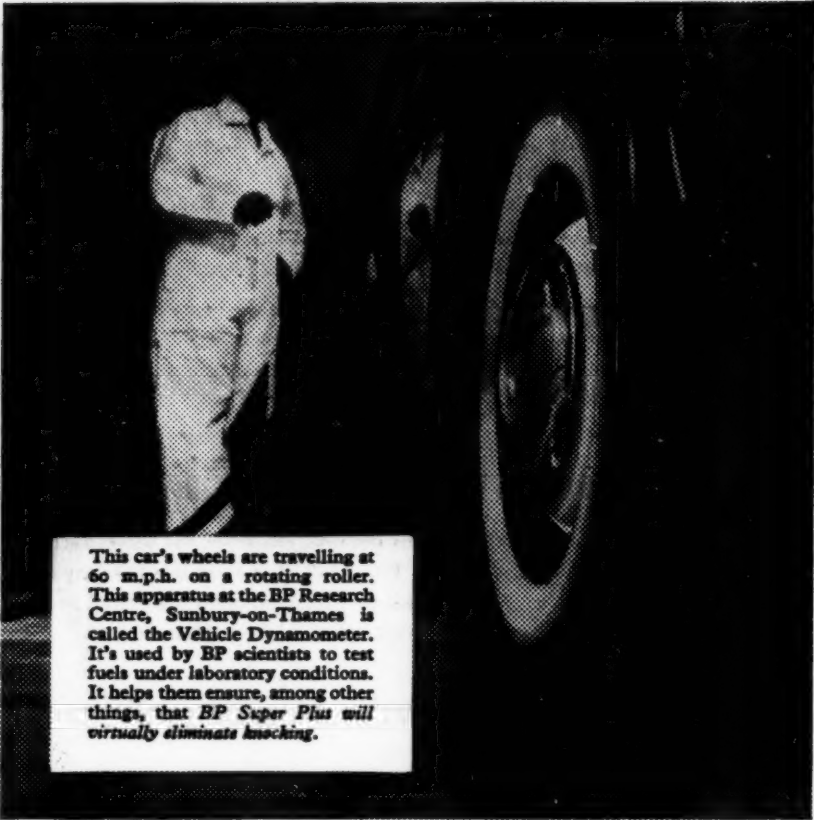
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